

# **Evaluation of IDRC's Fellowships and Awards Program (F&A)**

## **A Forward Looking Analysis**

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## ACRONYMS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ADDRF	African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AKFC	Aga Khan Foundation Canada
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural R&D
CBIE	Canadian Bureau for International Education
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CMAAE	Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office
F&A	Fellowships and Awards
FAS	Femmes Africa Solidarité
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFS	International Foundation for Science
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ISSP	Institut supérieur des sciences de la population
LACREG	Canada-Latin America and the Caribbean Research Exchange Grants
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPTCI	Nouveau programme de troisième cycle universitaire
OSSREA	Organization for Social Sciences Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
PASGR	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
PO	Program Officer
PS	Program Specialist
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
SJRA	Southern Junior Researchers Awards
SPS	Senior Program Specialist
UPEACE	University for Peace

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Capacity building has been a key goal of the Centre's research support since IDRC was established in 1970 but the definition of "capacity building" has changed over the years. The Fellowships and Awards program (F&A) has tended to concentrate on individual capacity building. In recent years, the F&A has developed a new approach with the Southern Junior Researchers Awards (SJRA), which are managed by institutions in the South. Arguably, this is a new and important form of capacity building that moves beyond individual institutions and attempts to create capacity in specific fields.

### **OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY**

The terms of reference for this study were to:

- assess the extent to which the set objectives of the awards programs have been achieved, including their contribution to meeting the Centre's priorities;
- outline the challenges encountered in the implementation of the awards programs;
- review the design of the F&A program and methodology used; and
- draw lessons for future programming (scope, content, and management/administration).

To gather the required information, F&A documentation was examined and interviews were held with IDRC staff in Ottawa and in Nairobi. SJRA projects were visited in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. While this study was being carried out, a parallel internal evaluative review was undertaken by F&A

## **PART 1: THE CURRENT SITUATION**

### **OTHER DONORS**

Most institutions that grant fellowships and awards as one of several core activities, do not manage their own programs. The United Kingdom Research Councils provide a wide range of scholarships that are allocated directly to university departments and supervisors who advertise for candidates. Many Canadian government departments provide scholarships and most are managed by implementing agencies.

Both Ford Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have wide ranging programs of fellowship and awards support in the US and internationally. Their programs are managed by appropriate educational or research institutions. The International Foundation for Science (IFS) manages its own grant programs but provision of such grants is its core business. All of the programs discussed above include a "value added" component such as research methods workshops, alumni networking, mentoring, etc.

The Canadian granting organizations have well-established systems for managing and evaluating awards applications. AUCC, CBIE and SSHRC all have larger awards and fellowship staffs than F&A and all manage awards on behalf of other organizations, including government departments. All are flexible in their approach and would be willing to consider a mixed management model whereby they handled the administrative aspects of the program and F&A continued to handle the substantive evaluations.

## **Overview of F&A**

Currently F&A has an annual budget of around \$3-3.5million. Staffing includes one senior program specialist, two program management officers, an awards officer, and a program assistant.

Since 1992 F&A has supported primarily Canadian-based training initiatives. Developing country training programs tend to be funded directly by IDRC programs, often with F&A support. In 2010, F&A was managing nine competitive awards and two non-competitive awards in addition to advising/collaborating with various Centre programming units on their own program-centred small grants awards.

### **Strengths**

F&A makes a solid contribution to the Centre's overall mission of empowerment through knowledge and it fulfills the stated F&A objectives of helping countries of the South to gain a critical mass of trained and experienced researchers; and giving a new generation of Canadians opportunity to participate actively in international development issues and to consider careers in this field.

### **Weaknesses**

In recent years, F&A has not updated its objectives or developed a clear vision of what it wants to achieve. There has been a lack of innovation in the awards program. F&A has been slow to change its operational methods and the current administrative procedures place a heavy burden on the F&A team. Most aspects of the award process are completed manually. There is no complete record of all of the training activities that have been carried out over the past four decades. There is no IDRC F&A alumni network and it has proved difficult to follow up with awardees.

### **IDRC Doctoral Research Awards (IDRA Awards)**

The awards are most likely to be won by students in Ontario and Quebec. Whatever the reason, it may be necessary for F&A program staff to make targeted contacts with institutions in under-represented areas. This could include electronic and telephone communication as well as personal visits to discuss IDRC's fellowships and awards programs. While this is already being done on an ad hoc basis, it is necessary to develop a defined program of visits/contacts.

The social sciences are over-represented among award holders. Again, it may be necessary for F&A staff to make targeted contacts with faculties of science and applied science to introduce the IDRA awards. This is especially important in the context of the Centre's desire to approach development problems from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The gender balance is relatively even and does not appear to need special attention but arguably francophone awardees are underrepresented at only 15 percent. Again, targeted approaches/visits to francophone institutions are necessary.

### **Centre Internship Awards**

From 13-20 internships are awarded annually and each successful applicant is assigned an IDRC mentor/advisor. F&A reviews and posts the research intern position descriptions, does a preliminary review of applications to ensure they are complete, prepares tables of applicants, makes photocopies and sends them to the appropriate programs for evaluation and selection of candidates. When the

interns have been selected, F&A organizes introductory sessions to familiarize the interns with the Centre and meets with them mid-way through their terms to discuss any problems. The experiences of interns vary widely and to a considerable extent this is due to the different styles of mentors. Some tend to be very hands-on, providing explanations as they go along. Others are less involved and expect interns to come to them with specific questions.

The Internship awards have a “value added” component in that each incoming group of interns is supposed to participate in a “Learning Forum” where they are able to discuss their ideas with others.

### **IDRC Sabbatical Awards**

Recipients of IDRC Sabbatical Awards are senior academics or researchers with substantial research and publication records and extensive personal and network contacts in a major program area of IDRC. They are expected to bring a critical and constructive external perspective to the Centre. IDRC staff who have had interaction with recent visiting fellows generally valued the experience and considered their program input to be important. However the amount of interaction with IDRC staff seems to be a function of individual personalities and interests and some visiting fellows have spent little time at IDRC, being based instead at other institutions.

### **F&A Administrative Procedures**

There are 120-140 applications per year for the IDRA awards. Administration of the applications is labour intensive and each call requires approximately five months of work for a program management officer and a program assistant.

IDRA applications are evaluated by relevant program staff at headquarters and in the regions. The evaluation forms are entirely subjective and it is common for evaluators to provide contradictory opinions. The research proposals often address new issues and POs find it intellectually rewarding to remain involved. POs often have detailed and up to date knowledge of local research environments and research institutions, far beyond that of most Canada-based university professors. However many POs do not give the applications priority and despite sending reminders, F&A staff often has to wait for weeks or even months before receiving all the evaluations.

F&A sends reviewer comments to selected IDRA candidates. Comments are also sent to rejected candidates if a request is made for comments or if they have been encouraged to re-apply.

### **Southern Junior Researcher Awards (SJRA)**

Overall, 13 grants have been made under SJRA, to nine African institutions, all of which disburse grants on a pan-African or regional basis. Ultimately, the disbursements will total CAD\$6,782,823 and more than 260 grants will be given.

Five SJRA recipients were visited:

- University for Peace (UPEACE) Africa Programme, Addis Ababa,
- Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Kampala, Uganda
- University of Nairobi, School of Computing and Informatics, Nairobi, Kenya
- African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya
- African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Nairobi, Kenya and Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE), Nairobi, Kenya



All the five SJRA institutions have developed effective administrative systems for managing their grants. None seemed to be facing serious problems. Some of the key points that emerged from the visits were:

- Francophone participation has proved to be challenging for all the East Africa-based institutions. While they all have made efforts to involve Francophones in their training programs, in most cases the onus has been on the Francophones to participate in English language workshops and training seminars.
- None of the SJRA institutions has achieved gender parity and in most cases they have not even reached 30 percent female participation. Although all the institution directors stated their commitment to increasing the participation of women, only AERC has developed a plan or strategy to make this happen.
- Only the University of Nairobi has a totally digitized application and selection process. Most of the others have partial electronic processes, accepting applications electronically but insisting on submission of hard copies of supporting documents. Most directors argued that connectivity is not sufficiently stable in many African countries to make a totally electronic process viable at this time.
- The quality and reliability of supervision for graduate students is a common problem. Since staff at most African universities are poorly paid, they often look for additional sources of income. Consequently they devote less time for student supervision which in turn means that students are often delayed for months or even years before they can complete their requirements for graduation. Several of the programs pay supervisors honoraria but this does not seem to make a significant difference.
- None of the programs has thought seriously about how to continue operating when IDRC support ends. All hoped for more IDRC support or for IDRC help in sourcing support from other donors.

### **SJRA Questions for Consideration**

There are some important differences in the way that the five institutions operate and F&A should consider organizing a conference or stocktaking workshop to compare and discuss the different models that have been tried by SJRA partners. The meeting could feed into the creation of a community of practice around F&A, in IDRC, in partnership institutions, and with other donors or institutions that support research training in the South.

## **PART II: NEW DIRECTIONS**

### **F&A Vision**

F&A should add an important dimension to the profile that IDRC presents to the world. It should be more than just a service program.

Perhaps because of the lack of a single vision for the program, there is no common practice for the review of competitions, evaluation and identification of lessons learned. F&A does not currently have sufficient capacity to analyse its own activities and to identify “lessons learned.” A starting point for the reorganization of F&A is the development of a new vision, the setting of priorities, and of short, medium

and long-term goals. F&A should take a leadership role in pushing forward thinking about fellowships and awards.

### **Funding and Human Resources**

F&A lacks sustained funding to allow it to focus on longer term capacity building. With an annual budget of only \$3.5 million or slightly less, the program has chosen to put relatively small amounts of money in many different areas. With only one SPS, it has proved difficult to undertake regular monitoring or to visit all institutions. Moreover, it has been hard for F&A to develop partnerships with other organizations that are involved with training.

Ideally, F&A should have two to three program specialists, at least one based in a regional office. For F&A to move beyond the administrative function that it now occupies, it will need more trained human resources and a higher budget.

### **Relationship of F&A with Other Centre Programs**

Although F&A is highly regarded by most POs, they have little idea of its activities beyond the IDRA and internship awards. This is especially true of regional POs. Also, regional program specialists often have little knowledge of the Canadian university system.

Although F&A has indicated an interest in collaboration, it does not currently have a close relationship with IDRC's multi-million dollar Think Tank initiative. There seem to be important areas of overlap. The Think Tank Initiative is supporting 24 institutions in Africa and includes targeted training and capacity building which is not coordinated with F&A training.

### **New Directions for the IDRA Awards**

It may be strategically more useful for the Centre to tie at least half the IDRA awards to topics that more closely reflect its emerging areas of research interest. IDRC has always tried to identify and work on emerging areas in development research. Doctoral students at Canadian universities often are engaged in this type of research, helping to develop new fields. If the Centre were to stipulate that a proportion of awards each year would be given on specific topics that relate to its strategic planning process, over time it would foster cutting edge work that would directly benefit to its programming. It also would be useful to organize an annual research meeting with IDRC program staff and successful candidates working on those topics. This would provide Centre staff with new findings that could feed directly into their programming and it would allow the IDRA awardees to network among themselves.

The Centre's new web-based grants submission system is expected to be operational within the next few weeks and it should be possible to simplify the application process. F&A should design a simple standard application format that can be filled out online. Forms should be available separately in French and in English. Research proposals should be limited to about 10 pages maximum and should be attached in PDF format.

SSHRC, AUCC or CBIE all would be able to manage the IDRA competitions on behalf of F&A. All have considerable experience in doing this for various government departments. The cost of this option should be explored by F&A. If the administration of the IDRA awards were outsourced then current F&A program staff could turn their attention to some of the new activities discussed here.

IDRA proposal evaluation should be quantified. F&A should design an evaluation form with clearly identified criteria, each given an appropriate grade weighting. The proposals should be sent to a mixture of IDRC POs and some outside experts. When the reviews have been received, a face to face meeting could be held with a small committee, including external evaluators and relevant IDRC program staff. During a one day meeting, the committee would review the evaluations, ensure that they are fair, and select an appropriate number of award winners.

## **Alumni Networking**

All awardees who have received support from F&A (IDRA awards, internships, sabbatical awards, etc.) are part of the F&A alumni and are a valuable resource for the Centre. F&A should ensure that alumni records are kept up to date and encourage the creation of alumni chapters in each province. A webpage should be developed specifically to share alumni news and highlight special achievements, honours, etc. Each year, F&A could host an alumni reception in a different part of the country, featuring an IDRC speaker.

## **Additional Activities**

The innovative approaches developed by IDRC's Evaluation Unit provide a good example of what could be done by F&A and how a program that has been considered a "service" function can move to a position of intellectual leadership around its core issues. F&A should aim towards becoming a recognized leader in the field of fellowships and awards. To achieve this goal, F&A should undertake a series of research-related activities which could include:

- Development of F&A policy briefs based on the findings of IDRC awardees
- Scoping studies on the training needs of different regions and/or in different disciplines
- Monitoring and evaluation of F&A activities leading to a series of research notes on "lessons learned" and new approaches to training

In addition, F&A can help to make IDRC better known in the Canadian context by organizing

- Short (three month) sabbatical placements of IDRC staff in Canadian universities, especially in departments of international development studies
- Creation of an annual marquee award for someone who has made an impact in the field of research training (perhaps a Hopper Award?)

## **New Directions for SJRA**

Each of the SJRA projects is performing well in its own right but it might have been more effective for F&A to invest CAD\$5,435,123 in a single research area. A more concentrated approach would have a greater impact in terms of capacity building.

SJRA currently is based exclusively in Africa but regional directors have stressed the need for fellowships support in all other regions. While all of these requests have merit, it will not be possible for F&A to satisfy all of them with its present funding and human resources profile. More importantly, such requests should form part of the overall visioning and priority setting exercise within F&A.

Another important issue for consideration is whether F&A should fund SJRA projects on its own or whether funding should always be in collaboration with other IDRC programs. All the SJRA projects have

had at least some support from a program area within the Centre. However, in several cases the collaborating programs have ceased to exist or program priorities have shifted.

### **Internships**

Most or all the students supported by SRJA are already employed in universities or research institutions. However many have had limited exposure to other institutions and would benefit from a brief period of attachment to another research-related institution either in their own country or in another country in the region.

### **E-learning**

E-learning, or online learning, is still in its infancy in most of Africa but as connectivity becomes less of a problem and computers become cheaper, it offers immense possibilities for education and for upgrading of skills and knowledge. It could be used for both formal degree programs and for short courses.

### **Scientific Entrepreneurship**

The development of science-based industry is essential for Eastern and Southern Africa to move to the next level of economic development. Most African PhDs seek employment at universities or in research institutes and relatively few have ventured into the private sector or set up their own research-based enterprises. F&A could make a significant contribution by organizing a series of workshops aimed at training researchers to move into entrepreneurship. Topics to be covered would include: writing a business plan; searching for venture capital; forming partnerships; patents and protection of intellectual property, etc. There are several institutions in the ESARO area that already provide entrepreneurship training and it would be possible to place a pilot project with them.

### **Research Management and Grant Administration**

Effective management of large research institutions and good grant administration continues to be a weak area. Boards of research organizations are often very weak and do not have a clear idea of their roles.

### **Sustainability**

Both ESARO POs and project leaders in the region emphasized that there will be a continuing need to train research human resources for the next decade and longer. SJRA project leaders tended to think of approaching traditional donors for support, although some talked of the need for national governments to take a greater responsibility in financing training. It may be opportune to explore the possibility of mobilizing local resources to support academic endeavours, including research training. F&A could commission a think piece about the possibility of raising money for academic endeavours in the ESARO region. The idea of naming university faculties or chairs after private donors could be explored and the possibility of establishing specific scholarships in honour of wealthy individuals could also be studied.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Canada-Based

1. Develop a clear vision for F&A programming with set objectives and indicators, covering each strategic plan cycle.
2. Ensure that F&A has sufficient resources, both human and financial, to allow it to move from being a service program to becoming a leader in innovative thinking on fellowships and awards.
3. Digitize all aspects of award management (calls, applications, application tracking, etc.). Simplify forms and quantify evaluation criteria.
4. Explore costs of outsourcing the administrative management of awards, especially the IDRA awards.
5. Tie at least half the IDRA awards to topics that more closely reflect the Centre's emerging areas of research interest as reflected in the strategic plans. Organize an annual research meeting with relevant IDRC program staff and successful IDRA candidates working on those topics.
6. Encourage awardees to publish short (2-3 page) policy briefs based on their research findings.
7. Produce scoping studies on the training needs of different regions and/or in different disciplines.
8. Undertake monitoring and evaluation of F&A activities and produce a series of research notes on "lessons learned" and new approaches to training.
9. Explore short sabbatical placement of IDRC staff in Canadian universities, allowing them to write up their program experiences with research training and/or reflections on innovative approaches to training.
10. Create a marquee fellowship or award for someone who has made an impact in the field of research training (perhaps a Hopper Award?)

### Regions-Based

11. Organize a series of workshops to train researchers in scientific entrepreneurship. Topics to be covered would include: writing a business plan; searching for venture capital; forming partnerships; patents and protection of intellectual property, etc.
12. Provide awards to train research managers and in collaboration with the Centre's regional controllers, organize workshops in research management and grant administration.
13. Organize a conference or stocktaking workshop to compare and discuss the different models that have been tried by SJRA partners. Include a focus on the potentials for e-learning

## INTRODUCTION

1. The International Development Research Centre's mission is: *Empowerment through Knowledge*. Building on this, IDRC's Fellowships and Awards program (F&A) aims to

- *help countries of the South gain a critical mass of trained and experienced researchers to promote sustainable and equitable development in their regions; and*
- *give a new generation of Canadians an opportunity to participate actively in international development issues and to consider careers in this field.*

2. Capacity building has been a key goal of the Centre's research support since IDRC was established in October 1970 but the definition of "capacity building" has changed over the years. The Centre's overall objective usually has been to create institutional capacity and frequently this has been achieved by providing training and research opportunities to individuals based in institutions. There are many examples of successful institution-building in the history of IDRC, but given the Centre's relatively small budget, the emphasis has been on creating and supporting capacity in specific research areas.

3. The work done by the Centre in new areas including participatory research methods, multi-and trans-disciplinary research, and emerging areas such as ecohealth has been of fundamental importance and has had a significant impact in encouraging wider recognition for these issues. Over the years, different programs and divisions within IDRC have systematically included training components into their research grants, thus playing an important role in both individual and institutional capacity building.

4. The Fellowships and Awards program has concentrated less on institutional and more on individual capacity building. In recent years, the Centre has developed a new approach with the Southern Junior Researchers Awards (SJRA), which are managed by institutions in the South. Arguably, this is a new and important form of capacity building that moves beyond individual institutions and attempts to create capacity in specific fields.

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

5. The terms of reference for this study were to:

- assess the extent to which the set objectives of the awards programs have been achieved, including their contribution to meeting the Centre's priorities;
- outline the challenges encountered in the implementation of the awards programs;
- review the design of the F&A program and methodology used; and
- draw lessons for future programming (scope, content, and management/administration).

6. To gather the required information, F&A documentation was examined and interviews were held with IDRC staff in Ottawa and in Nairobi. SJRA projects were visited in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. While this study was being carried out, a parallel internal evaluative review was undertaken by F&A. The two reviews should be read together to get an overall picture of F&A. The external review focuses specifically on how F&A activities could be improved and makes suggestions for new activities.

Part I of this report begins with an overview of the F&A competitions based in Canada and the SJRA awards based in Africa and describes their current management processes. Part II discusses potential areas of improvement for management of both sets of awards. Part III presents recommendations.

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF F&A IN IDRC**

7. Fellowships and awards have been part of the package of support offered by IDRC since 1971. Perhaps because the Canadian pool of expertise in international development was relatively small, early training awards were oriented primarily towards Canadians and permanent residents. By 1972, a number of programs were underway, including thesis research grants, research associate grants, research fellows and a Regional Research and Training Program for South and Southeast Asia (co-funded with the Rockefeller Foundation). By 1973 the Centre was providing training to developing country researchers in the context of projects, a practice that continues to the present day.

8. Over the past four decades the budget and staffing of the Centre's F&A program has been expanded and reduced in accordance with the Centre's overall budgets, however it has always been an integral part of Centre operations and it has been the key mechanism for Centre outreach to Canadian audiences. Thousands of Canadian students have received IDRC fellowships for doctoral or other degree-related research and in the process F&A has helped to build a latent network of IDRC alumni from coast to coast. Overall IDRC fellowship support continues to increase. In 2009-10, 152 awards were approved, up from 123 in 2008-09.

## **PART 1: THE CURRENT SITUATION**

### **FELLOWSHIPS ACTIVITIES OF OTHER DONORS**

9. Before examining the current work of F&A, it is useful to put it in context by briefly describing the activities of a few donors that provide scholarships and awards related to international development. Special attention is given to the administration of these awards.

10. The Rhodes Scholarship, established in 1902, is the oldest program of international scholarships for post-graduate studies and continues to be the most prestigious. The Rhodes Scholarship application process is completely electronic. It uses an online application system that allows all supporting documentation to be uploaded. If candidates are invited for interviews, they asked to bring their original documents with them.

11. Today most institutions that grant scholarships as only one of their core activities, do not manage their own programs. For example the United Kingdom Research Councils provide a wide range of scholarships but they are allocated to university departments and supervisors who advertise for candidates. Many Canadian government departments provide scholarships but most are managed by implementing agencies.

12. In 2000 four US foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie and MacArthur) committed US\$100 million to building capacity in 18 African universities. Much of their subsequent fellowship activity was channelled into this joint initiative. The Association of African Universities (AAU) also offers some fellowships and awards. They have a Small Grants for Dissertations and Theses program, aimed at facilitating the early completion of research dissertations and theses by graduate students in African universities and to improve the quality of research conducted by graduate students in African universities.

**Ford Foundation** <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fordfellowships/>

13. The Ford Foundation has a Fellowship Program for US citizens at the pre-doctoral, dissertation and post-doctoral levels. The program has been administered by the National Research Council since 1979. Through its Fellowship Program, the Ford Foundation seeks to increase the diversity of American college and university faculties by increasing their ethnic and racial diversity, to maximize the educational benefits of diversity, and to increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students. In 2010, the Foundation awarded approximately 40 pre-doctoral fellowships, 20 dissertation fellowships and 18 post-doctoral fellowships. All pre-doctoral and dissertation fellows attend an annual Conference of Ford Fellows and all awardees have access to the Ford Fellows Liaisons network of former Ford Fellows who have volunteered to provide mentoring or support to current fellows. The two-day Conference of Ford Fellows exposes participants to sessions on networking; interact with university presses; career planning; proposal writing; etc.

The Foundation also has an International Fellows program that is coordinated in West Africa by the AAU.

**Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**  
<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/topics/Pages/scholarships.aspx>

14. The Gates Foundation supports eight different scholarship programs at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels, some aimed at disadvantaged American students, others at students in developing countries. All the programs are administered outside the Foundation, either by universities or by other educational institutions or networks. Applications are accepted primarily online and in the case of the Gates Cambridge Scholarships, applicants are asked to pay an additional fee of £35 for paper applications.

**African Women in Agricultural R&D (AWARD)** <http://awardfellowships.org/>

15. This grants program was established in 2008 by the Gender and Diversity program of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science with tailored, two-year fellowships. AWARD currently has 180 fellows working in agricultural research and development from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. All have completed a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in selected disciplines. AWARD is a US\$15 million, five-year project with plans to expand to a second phase starting in 2013. In the three rounds (2008, 2009, 2010), AWARD received a total of 1995 applications. Final selections are made by a committee composed primarily of outside experts who grade according to a set of weighted criteria. AWARD is currently discussing the development of a new program for agricultural entrepreneurs with support



from the International Fertilized Development Center in the US. They hope to start a small pilot project in 2011.

**International Foundation for Science (IFS)** <http://www.ifs.se/>

16. IFS is a Swedish research council with the mission to build the capacity of developing countries in sciences. Since 1974 IFS has supported more than 4600 grantees in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. IFS's research grants (maximum of US\$12,000) are intended for the purchase of equipment, expendable supplies, and literature and to arrange related fieldwork activities. It is expected that the IFS grantees already receive a salary and are employed by or otherwise attached to a developing country research institution.

17. IFS has a small staff in Stockholm consisting of a director, seven scientific program coordinators, four program administrators and seven additional staff (purchasing, finance, office management, etc.) There is also a staff member based in the RUFORUM office in Kampala. IFS receives 1600-1800 applications each year and makes 200-300 grants annually. Applications are accepted all year but processed twice annually. Applications are 90 percent electronic with supporting documents submitted in PDF format. A completely web-based process is under design.

18. Each application goes to six reviewers, who judge the proposal based on established evaluation criteria. The reviews are done electronically and then the reviewers meet physically. They prepare detailed comments for candidates to help them to improve their proposals. The committees recommend a slate of candidates for awards and the final decision is made by IFS management. The reviewers are not paid for their participation. IFS is considering moving towards a quantitative grid system to achieve greater efficiency in evaluations and to reduce costs but there are no plans to drop the review committee meetings.

19. Women currently make up only about 30 percent of the successful candidates and IFS is considering affirmative action strategies to improve this imbalance. They try to achieve gender balance in their scientific review committees but find that senior female scientists are often too busy to participate.

20. Like IDRC, IFS strives to "add value" to its awards. Awardees attend conferences and seminars on topics like proposal writing, scientific writing, methodology, etc. They often put awardees in touch with potential mentors, although mentoring tends to be very specific, e.g. on statistics or research methodology.

21. The best awardees become IFS advisors after finishing their projects and are asked to sit on scientific committees. IFS also has organized formal networks of their alumni. These groups often conduct

**Box 1: Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)**

This is a new multi-million dollar program, funded by the British DFID. It will establish a formal partnership among African universities on M.A. and/or Ph.D. programs focussing on research and public policy. PASGR hopes to transform the landscape in social policy analysis in much the same way that AERC has been able to do in economics. The initial step, currently underway, is the development of a collaborative M.A. program. The focus is on developing core courses on research methods and related skills. Students will receive grants of \$50,000-\$75,000. The PASGR program will also provide research grants to staff at collaborating universities. The program will include some of the new African private universities as well as the longer established public institutions. For now, PASGR will work exclusively with Anglophone universities but it is expected that francophone institutions will also become involved at a later stage.

workshops and help to give IFS visibility in their region. IFS does not provide funding for this purpose. However, IFS does track its awardees and follows their progress as they become established scientists.

## **Discussion**

22. Both Ford Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have wide ranging programs of research support in the US and internationally. As with the UK Research Councils, their fellowships and awards programs are managed by appropriate educational or research institutions. IFS manages its own research grant programs but provision of such grants is its core business. IFS has developed a streamlined system that functions electronically, requiring few documents to be sent by mail. Evaluation of proposals is done electronically by former grant holders situated in different parts of the world. All of the programs discussed above include a “value added” component such as research methods workshops, alumni networking, mentoring, etc.

## **Canadian Examples**

### **Aga Khan Foundation Fellowship Program (AKFC) <http://www.akfc.ca/>**

23. The AKFC program, founded in 1989, has some similarities with the IDRC internship program. It is aimed at young Canadians and landed immigrants and includes a month-long pre-departure management seminar and an eight month overseas placement in Africa or Asia. Approximately 20 fellows are selected each year and they are placed with overseas NGOs working in education, health, media and microfinance. Applicants must be under 30 and can apply to be placed in one of three streams: international development management; international microfinance and microenterprise; or young professionals in media. The application forms are fairly short and ask the candidates to reflect on their most substantial achievements to date, their opinion of the most critical issues in international development, the types of challenges they could encounter living and working overseas, the type of contribution they could make to the host institution and how the internship would fit into their long term career plans. Applicants are ranked and the top ones are interviewed before final selections are made. Candidates are expected to contribute CAD\$1000 towards the cost of the internship but the Foundation covers the remaining costs.

### **Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) <http://www.aucc.ca/>**

24. AUCC runs numerous domestic and international scholarship programs at both the undergraduate and post-graduate level and has a staff of 12 in its Higher Education Scholarships Division. Scholarship applications are done primarily online but original documents must still be sent by post. AUCC has developed a scholarship application tracking system that allows applicants to check on the progress of their applications. This has greatly reduced administrative workload for staff since individual communication with candidates has almost been eliminated. When scholarship applications are received, they are read internally to ensure they meet eligibility requirements and then are sent to a selection committee composed of faculty members from different universities. Committee members are selected with attention to geographic, gender and language balance. They receive photocopied application forms and evaluate according to quantitative criteria established by AUCC. Final selections are made at face to face meetings or in videoconference meetings.

25. AUCC has managed scholarship programs for numerous Canadian government departments and also the UNESCO L’Oreal Women in Science awards. The nature and number of awards varies and AUCC works out a mutually agreeable management system with each organization. In some cases the organizations are involved in selection of candidates. In other cases they are not.

26. AUCC's International Division also runs a number of awards. Since 1995, it has managed the Canada-Latin America and the Caribbean Research Exchange Grants (LACREG) with IDRC funding. It aims to strengthen international partnerships and consolidate emerging networks among researchers from Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean. A parallel program aimed at Canadian-African partnerships was recently established.

**Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) <http://www.cbie.ca/>**

27. CBIE manages awards programs for various government departments, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian Export Development Corporation. Their Membership and Scholarships program has a staff of seven. CBIE already has an online application process and will soon be able to accept supporting documents online. Final selections are made by expert committees drawn from across Canada. In the past they have received photocopies of eligible applications but they are currently experimenting with providing committee members with USB sticks containing the applications. They would like to move towards fully electronic selection processes but this continues to be resisted by members of the selection committee, many of whom prefer to read hard copies without being tied to a computer. CBIE has a quantitative grading system and they do not provide comments to successful or unsuccessful candidates.

**Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.aspx>**

28. SSHRC supports university-based research, research training and knowledge mobilization activities in the social sciences and humanities. SSHRC currently offers two MA awards programs and seven PhD awards programs. They are moving towards an electronic platform but do not yet have a completely integrated system. However, all applications are accepted online and students can upload c.v.s and other documents in PDF form. Evaluation is done by committees based in universities around Canada and all files are sent electronically. Evaluators either receive files on a USB stick or they enter a password-protected extra-net site. Evaluation is done on a voluntary basis and final selection is made mostly through conference calls. Evaluators grade quantitatively, according to criteria established and publicized in advance.

29. The SSHRC fellowships program has an administrative staff of 30 and they manage a few fellowships on behalf of others. They would be particularly interested in managing the IDRA awards because they are trying to broaden their international outreach.

**Discussion**

30. The Canadian granting organizations have well-established systems for managing and evaluating awards applications. While they are not completely digitalized, they seem to have advanced further towards this goal than has F&A. AUCC, CBIE and SSHRC all have larger awards and fellowship staffs than F&A and all manage awards on behalf of other organizations, including departments of the Government of Canada. All are flexible in their approach and would be willing to consider a mixed management model whereby they handled the administrative aspects of the program and F&A continued to handle the substantive evaluations.

## OVERVIEW OF F&A

31. Before Centre-wide cutbacks and restructuring in 1992, the Fellowship and Awards Division had eight program officers, three based in regional offices, and a budget of \$6 million. Currently, F&A (now a program of the Special Initiatives Division), has an annual budget of around \$3-3.5million. Staff includes one senior program specialist, two program management officers, an awards officer, and a program assistant.

Competitive Awards	Non-Competitive Awards
IDRC Doctoral Research Awards (IDRA) Offered twice annually	Professional Development Awards (PDA)
I. Canadian Window on International Development Awards (international issues) Offered annually	IDRC Sabbatical Awards
II. Canadian Window on International Development Awards (First Nations issues) Offered annually	
Centre Internship Awards Offered annually.	
IDRC Awards for International Development Journalism Offered annually. Managed by universities	
Community Forestry: Trees and People - John G. Bene Fellowships Offered annually	
Bentley Cropping Systems Fellowship Offered biannually	
IDRC Science Journalism Awards Offered annually. Managed by recipient organizations.	
Awards Program for Southern Junior Researchers (SJRA) 10 awards programs managed in sub-Saharan Africa	

**Table 2: Awards Managed by F&A 2010**

32. Since 1992 F&A has supported primarily Canadian-based training initiatives. Developing country training programs usually are funded directly by IDRC programs, often with F&A support. For example, F&A was involved with the Agropolis and Ecolopolis awards granted under the Urban Poverty and Environment program initiative. They also provided support to the EcoHealth awards under the Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health program initiative. More recently, F&A has provided advice to the H2O award competition organized by the Climate Change and Water program.

33. In 2007 the F&A program established the Southern Junior Researcher Awards (SJRA), beginning a new initiative to provide doctoral research awards and a few full-study PhD and MA/MSc scholarships to

African students in a few key programmatic areas. F&A collaborated with various IDRC program units in establishing the SJRA awards but took the lead role in developing, managing and financing.

34. In 2010, F&A was managing nine competitive awards and two non-competitive awards (Table 1) in addition to advising/ collaborating with various Centre programming units on their own program-centred small grants awards.

## **Strengths**

35. The F&A program successfully has organized and managed competitions for scholarships and awards over the past four decades. Interviews with program staff both in HQ and in the ESARO regional office confirmed that F&A is held in high regard, works efficiently and is always open to collaboration with other programs. Similar comments were made by leaders of the SJRA programs in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. F&A is responsive to problems or issues that arise, either with IDRC colleagues or with outside applicants, and all members of the program have a good understanding of their own responsibilities and value working together as a team.

36. F&A makes a solid contribution to the Centre's overall mission of empowerment through knowledge and it fulfills the stated F&A objectives of helping countries of the South to gain a critical mass of trained and experienced researchers; and giving a new generation of Canadians opportunity to participate actively in international development issues and to consider careers in this field.

## **Weaknesses**

37. In recent years, F&A has not updated its objectives or developed a clear vision of what it wants to achieve. Perhaps because of heavy workloads, F&A has tended to concentrate on "business as usual" without reflecting deeply about the changing nature of international development, the changing capacity-building needs of developing countries and of Canada, and the closed-end nature of traditional scholarships (i.e. students receive financial support for their studies and then are left to their own devices with respect to finding employment or gaining practical experience). Consequently there has been a lack of innovation in the awards program.

38. F&A has been slow to change its operational methods and the current administrative procedures place a heavy burden on all members of the F&A team. Only one F&A officer has signing authority so documents are sometimes delayed because of work overload and/or official travel on the part of the SPS. The program management officer associated with the SJRA program is discouraged from communicating directly with SJRA project leaders for reasons of protocol which again places a heavy burden on the SPS and inevitably causes delays.

39. A second, related weakness is that most aspects of the award process are completed manually rather than electronically.<sup>1</sup> For example, while application forms are available online, they must be downloaded and submitted by post. Originals of most of the supporting documents (letters from universities, reference letters, transcripts, etc.) also must be sent by post. Once applications have been received they are photocopied and sent to reviewers in hard copies. In this respect, F&A administrative procedures are more laborious than those of the other organizations discussed above.

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<sup>1</sup> F&A approached the Centre's Information and Technology Development Division in 2008 for help in setting up a pilot electronic system but this has not yet been implemented.

## Inadequate data

39. A third weakness is that the Centre does not have an accurate overview of the impact of its awards programs. Although F&A, through announcements in *Echonet* or meetings with directors regularly reminds programs to send training information, this is not done systematically. There has never been a Centre-wide policy of ensuring that F&A or its predecessor programs are informed of all scholarships and awards granted through PIs and regional offices. Thus there is no complete record of all of the training activities that have been carried out over the past four decades. For example, the African Climate Change Fellowship Program, managed out of ESARO, has trained 44 PhDs in its first phase. Similarly, the Environmental Economics for South East Asian Scholars awards program, managed out of ASRO, has trained large numbers of researchers but these statistics are not part of the F&A database.

40. Although the idea has been discussed from time to time, there is no IDRC F&A alumni network and it has proved difficult to follow up with awardees. For example, a 2008 tracer study looked at 590 developing country awardees who had been supported for training in Canada, Europe and the US between 1971 and 1992. The study tracked down about 30 percent of awardees during this period and found most had stayed in their regions, working in development-related education and research. However it was difficult to trace awardees and this underscored the need to keep good records and ensure that appropriate information is collected and updated regularly (Graham 2008). An internal study conducted in 2007 looked at the experiences of Canadian-based award holders from 1995 to 2007. Most of the 267 respondents remained professionally and personally committed to international development; were still engaged in development-related or academic studies; worked in government departments and agencies, NGOs, or universities and colleges; or were project officers responsible for policy analysis or project management. A more recent study showed that the majority of Canadian-based award recipients pursued academic careers (Box 2).

### Box 2: IDRC Tracer Study, 2010

The results of the Tracer Study show that the majority of award holders are from Ontario and Quebec universities, mainly from Anthropology, Geography, Political Science, Health Studies, and Sociology. There is a concentration of award holders in certain university programs, such as the Anthropology program at the University of Toronto, Political Science at York University, and Anthropology at McGill University. The majority of former award holders have chosen careers in academia. Comparing results to the last Tracer Study conducted in 2007, the number of award holders pursuing careers in universities and government grew. A large number of recipients of PDA and Internship Awards found careers at IDRC and in universities. The vast majority of tracked award holders stay in Canada, mostly in Ontario, and secondly in Quebec. Those in academia are mostly professors teaching in the fields of Geography, Environmental Studies, and International Development (Chernikova 2010)

41. Beyond such small studies and a series of individual “success” stories that have been publicized from time to time, the Centre does not have a good overview of the impact of 40 years of fellowships and awards. This is a lost opportunity and there is a need to immediately set up a tracking system that will ensure all future training awards are reported to F&A.

## CANADA-BASED AWARDS

This section provides an overview of the Canadian-based awards. It begins with a brief discussion of the awards themselves and then analyses the current administrative procedures.

### Competitive Awards

#### IDRC Doctoral Research Awards (IDRA Awards)

43. The IDRC Doctoral Research Awards (formerly known as the Young Canadian Researchers Awards) have existed since 1982 and over almost three decades, the Centre has made a solid contribution to building up Canadian expertise in development research.<sup>2</sup> The IDRA awards support doctoral research in areas related to the Centre's research priorities, including social and economic policy; agriculture and environment; information and communication technologies for development ; and innovation, policy and science. Applications are evaluated according to criteria, such as relevance to sustainable and equitable development and to IDRC priorities, quality of the research proposal, and suitability of the candidate. Evaluations are carried out by IDRC program staff in Ottawa and in the relevant regional offices, and the final decision is made by the F&A SPS, based on the evaluation results.

#### Regional Disparities

44. An analysis of awards given over the past three years (2007-2009 inclusive) suggests that they are heavily skewed towards Ontario and Quebec (Table 2). About 79 percent went to students at universities in these two provinces.<sup>3</sup> Almost 19 percent went to students at McGill University. York University students were the second largest group, accounting for 12 percent and the Universities of Montreal, Toronto and British Columbia each accounted for about 8 percent. The Maritime provinces and Saskatchewan were completely absent, despite the fact that both Saint Mary's University and Dalhousie University in Halifax have strong programs in international development studies. Smaller universities in British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba were also unrepresented. Analysis of the strategies used to promote the IDRA awards does not suggest obvious reasons for the Ontario/Quebec bias; awards announcements are sent to national listservs and networks.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2004, F&A expanded the IDRA awards and the Canadian Window on International Development Awards programs to include students from developing countries studying in Canada as well as Canadian citizens/permanent residents. At the same time, it stopped supporting Masters awards.

<sup>3</sup> Of course the students who received the awards may have originated from outside Ontario or Quebec but the important point is that students studying at institutions outside Central Canada seemed less likely to benefit from the IDRA awards which in turn meant that their institutions were less likely to become part of the larger IDRC network.

**Table 2: IDRA Awards 2007-2009**

ONTARIO		QUEBEC		BRITISH COLUMBIA		ALBERTA		MANITOBA	
University	Awards	University	Awards	University	Awards	University	Awards	University	Awards
Western Ontario	7	McGill	20	UBC	9	Alberta	6	Manitoba	4
Ottawa	7	Sherbrooke	1	Simon Fraser	1	Calgary	2		
Queen's	2	Laval	1						
Carleton	3	UQAM	1						
Wilfred Laurier	2	Rimouski	1						
Guelph	4	Montreal	9						
York	13								
Toronto	9								
Brock	1								
McMaster	1								
Waterloo	1								
Windsor	1								
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>		<b>33</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>106</b>								

45. In 2010 there are 83 universities in Canada with degree-granting authority. Seventy offer at least some post-graduate training. Table 3 provides information on where these institutions are located. It is important to note, of course, that not all the institutions in Table 3 necessarily have post-graduate programs relevant to international development.

**Table 3: Post Graduate Degree Granting Institutions in Canada and Language of Instruction**

### Disciplinary Focus

46. The IDRA awards were most frequently won by students in the social sciences. Between 2007-2009, 52 percent went to students of geography and urban planning; political science; anthropology; sociology; education and economics. Almost 18 percent were in the health sciences (public health/ medicine and nutrition). Ten percent went to students studying environment, rural studies, earth and atmospheric sciences and forestry. Students in natural and applied sciences (biology and engineering) received 7.5 percent of the awards. The remaining awards went to students of law, social work, communications, management and interdisciplinary studies.

UNIVERSITY	English	French	Both	Total
Alberta	3		1	4
British Colombia	10			10
Manitoba	1	1	1	3
New Brunswick	2	1		3
Newfound-land/ Labrador	1			1
Nova Scotia	9	1		10
Ontario	14		6	20
Prince Edward Island	1			1
Quebec	3	13		16
Saskatchewan	2			2



**Table 4: Regional Focus of IDRA Awards**

Region	AWARDS (%)
LACRO	28
ESARO	25
WARO	23
MERO	7
SARO	6
ASRO	5
ESARO/WARO ESARO/LACRO ESARO/SARO	6

### Gender, Language and Regional Focus

47. The 106 awardees included 56 males (53 percent) and 50 females (47 percent). Sixteen awards (15 percent) were given to applicants who applied in French.<sup>4</sup> Table 4 indicates the regional focus of the IDRA awards in 2007-09. The emphasis on LACRO is consistent with current Canadian foreign policy focus on this region.

### Discussion

48. The overview of IDRA awards reveals some interesting trends. An analysis of three years is not sufficiently in-depth to provide definitive understanding of the program, but it may suggest some broad tendencies. First, it appears that the awards are most likely to be won by students in Ontario and Quebec.<sup>5</sup> It may be that the IDRA awards are promoted more consistently at these universities, that the universities are larger and/or that they have more programs related to international development. Possibly F&A has established a closer working relationship with universities located closest to IDRC headquarters in Ottawa. Possibly faculty and staff at these universities have more regular exposure to IDRC and are more likely to advertise the awards to their students; some may be former award holders themselves. Whatever the reason, it would be useful for F&A program staff to make targeted contacts with institutions in under-represented areas. This could include electronic and telephone communication as well as personal visits to discuss IDRC's fellowships and awards programs. While this is already being done on an ad hoc basis, it may be necessary to develop a defined program of visits/contacts.

49. Secondly, it seems that the social sciences are over-represented among award holders. Relatively few natural and applied scientists receive awards. It may be that advertisement of the awards is concentrated in faculties of social sciences. Of course students in the natural and applied sciences are less likely to have a fieldwork component in their research, thus making them ineligible for IDRA awards. However, if they were aware of the possibility of receiving such support they may consider a research topic that has an international development component. Again, it may be necessary for F&A staff to make targeted contacts with faculties of science and applied science to introduce the IDRA awards. This is especially important in the context of the Centre's desire to approach development problems from a multidisciplinary perspective.

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<sup>4</sup> Of course it is possible that some Francophones choose to apply in English, for a number of reasons – better chances of publishing in the future, studying at an institution, having an English supervisor, seeing IDRC in Ottawa as an 'English' institution and wanting to increase their chances, etc. To determine more accurately the number of Francophone applicants, it would be necessary to consult the CENTRA file of each candidate and identify their first or preferred language. Notwithstanding these considerations, it is still important to note that relatively fewer candidates apply in French.

<sup>5</sup> A similar observation was made in an internal review of Young Canadian Research Awards and International Doctoral Research Awards undertaken in 2003 (Woo, Ospina and Jiménez 2003). A more recent tracer study (Chernikova 2010) found the same pattern.

50. Thirdly, the gender balance for the awards during 2007-09 is relatively even and does not appear to need special attention but arguably Francophone awardees are underrepresented at only 15 percent. Ideally their number should be consistent with the representation of Francophones in Canada's population (around 22 percent). F&A staff should make regular visits to French-speaking institutions, especially the smaller ones outside Montreal (e.g. Moncton).

### **Centre Internship Awards**

51. Internships are designed to provide hands-on learning experiences in research program management - in the creation, dissemination and utilization of knowledge from an international perspective. Interns spend half their time doing a research project and the remainder working under POs on research management. From 13-20 internships are awarded annually and each successful applicant is assigned a mentor/advisor from IDRC program staff. F&A organizes an information session for mentors every year when interns join the Centre although some do not attend the session. The mentor provides the intern with career guidance, sets substantive tasks and ensures that s/he submits monthly activity reports, travel reports, progress reports and a final report. The mentor is supposed to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the work of the intern but many do not do this, thereby missing a good learning opportunity for the intern.

52. For the 2011 internship positions (expected to be 13), 234 applications have been received. The application process is lengthy and some interns said that the requirements are not clear. One suggested that it would be helpful to post a few successful internship applications from years past on the website to give prospective applicants a better idea of what is required.

53. Interns apply for specific positions advertised by different programs within IDRC and F&A reviews and posts the position descriptions, does a preliminary review of applications to ensure they are complete, prepares tables of applicants, makes photocopies and sends them to the appropriate programs for evaluation and selection of candidates. When the interns have been selected, F&A has a organizes introductory sessions to familiarize the interns with the Centre and meets with interns mid-way through their terms to discuss any problems.

54. The experiences of interns vary widely and to a considerable extent this is due to the different styles of mentors. Some tend to be very hands-on, providing explanations as they go along. Others are less involved and expect interns to come to them with specific questions.

55. Evaluations of the intern experience are generally very positive although some feel that the title "research intern" does not properly reflect the work that they do and the experience that some bring to the role. Initially interns were expected to be MA graduates but increasingly PhD holders have applied and been accepted into the program. Many cohorts of interns have developed strong networks among themselves. They have Facebook pages and meet regularly for social and networking events. Many interns have turned their experience into longer term employment with IDRC and several have gone on to become program staff.

56. The Internship awards have a "value added" component in that each incoming group of interns is supposed to participate in a "Learning Forum" where they are able to discuss their ideas with others. The 2010 Learning Forum focussed on research methods which some interns found extremely useful and others, who already had training in qualitative methods, less so.

## **Canadian Window on International Development Awards**

57. These awards reflect the fact that the boundaries between international development policy and domestic policy are increasingly parallel so that both Canada and the less developed countries benefit from research on these issues. The complexities of national economic and social development in Canada are often related to international issues. The Canadian Window awards support research that illustrates these interrelationships. The Centre offers up to three awards for doctoral research that explores the relationship between Canadian aid, trade, immigration, diplomatic policy, etc., and international development and the alleviation of global poverty. A second type of award is granted for doctoral or master's research into a problem that is common to First Nations or Inuit communities in Canada and a developing region of the world. In practice, the Canadian Window awards do not receive many applications. Successful applicants receive their entire grant in one payment (as is true of IDRA awardees) and many have not sent in final reports. Application and selection processes are similar to those for the IDRA awards. The F&A internal review addresses the potential problems with granting unconditional awards.

58. F&A has several smaller awards programs, including the IDRC Awards for International Development Journalism (managed by Canadian universities but monitored by F&A), the Community Forestry: Trees and People - John G. Bene Fellowships, the Bentley Cropping Systems Fellowship; and the IDRC Science Journalism Awards (managed by other institutions but monitored by F&A). These are being examined by the parallel Internal Evaluation and are not considered in detail here. However, it is worth noting that these small awards create an additional management burden for the already over-stretched F&A staff. Consequently it would be worthwhile to consider asking appropriate professional societies to administer those awards which are still managed in-house and to provide a small amount of financial support for this purpose.

## **Non-Competitive Awards**

### **Professional Development Awards (PDA)**

59. Professional Development Awards are intended for Canadians, permanent residents or citizens of developing countries with at least an MA and some career experience. The objective of the program is to help these individuals to develop their expertise in a particular professional capacity by working with IDRC staff on program and research issues. Competitions are not held for this award and individuals are selected according to their education, qualifications, and experience. In some cases, interns have been awarded PDAs when their internships have been completed. Tenure can range from six months to one year.

### **IDRC Sabbatical Awards**

60. Recipients of IDRC Sabbatical Awards are senior academics or researchers with substantial research and publication records and extensive personal and network contacts in a major program area of IDRC. They are expected to bring a critical and constructive external perspective to the Centre. The number of awards is limited and in most cases, the researcher is nominated by the director of a program area. Before the end of their term, awardees are expected to produce a written report detailing the

results of their work and conceptual thinking and making recommendations for future work of the Centre in their field of development research. Table 5 gives some details on the sabbatical award holders between 2000-2010.

**Table 5: IDRC Sabbatical Award Holders, 2000 - 2010**

Nationality	Sex	Home Institution	Length of Award	Final Report Received
Canadian	F	University	May 2000 –August 2003	yes
Lebanese	M	University	March 2003 – March 2006	Yes
Canadian	M	Government	March 2002 – September 2004	No
Indonesian	M	University	March 2003 – July 2004	Yes
Canadian	M	Government	October 2003 – October 2005	No
Ugandan	F	Government	July 2003 – January 2005	No
Canadian	M	Private Sector	February 2004 – January 2005	Yes
Canadian	M	World Bank	November 2004 – November 2005	Yes
			November 2005 – December 2006	No
Canadian	M	CGIAR	May 2005 – September 2006	Yes
Canadian	M	University	May 2006 – August 2008	No
			September 2008 – September 2009	Yes
Canadian	M	Government	September 2006 – January 2008	Yes
Canadian	M	Government	April 2006 –April 2007	Yes
			April 2007 – April 2008	Yes
			April 2008 – April 2009	Yes
UK	F	University	January 2006 –March 2007	Yes
Kenyan	M	Government	December 2006 –February 2008	yes
Sri Lanka	M	Consultant	January 2007 –October 2009	Yes
Canadian	M	Government	April 2008 – July 2009	Yes
Canadian	F	Government	April 2009 – April 2010	Yes
			April 2010 – August 2010	Yes
Indian	F	UN	July 2007 – January 2011	On-going
Canadian	M	Diplomacy	April 2007 –April 2008	Yes
Canadian	M	University/ Independent	November 2009 – July 2010	Yes

61. Based on the information in Table 5, there have been 20 sabbatical awards since 2000. Four awardees received extensions to their original awards. Awards have ranged in length from a few months to more than three years. The majority of the awardees (65 percent) have been Canadian and 75 percent have been male. Among the 13 Canadian recipients there have been only two female recipients. The recipients have been fairly evenly divided in terms of home institutions (i.e. the institution where the award holder was based before coming to IDRC): eight from government; six from universities and the remainder from multilateral organizations, the diplomatic service or the private sector. Because some awardees received more than one contract, a total of 25 final reports were due. Only 20 final

reports were received. Some of the award holders have written books that have had a wide impact. For example, a book by a recent award holder, has been nominated for the 2010/11 Donner Prize which celebrates the best book on Canadian public policy.

62. IDRC staff who have had interaction with recent visiting fellows generally valued the experience and considered their program input to be important. However the amount of interaction with IDRC staff seems to be a function of individual personalities and interests and some visiting fellows have spent very little time at IDRC, being based instead at other institutions. Experience with those based at the Centre has been mixed. Some have made contributions to specific programs while others have tended to stay in their offices and do their own work. While the advantages of offering support to senior scholars can be significant it is clear that guidelines for what is expected of scholars should be made more explicit.

## F&A ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

**Table 6: Tasks Involved in IDRA Administration**

<b>Pre-Competition</b>	Respond to questions from potential candidates
	Update competition announcements on the website
	Update documents for applicants (applications forms, etc.)
<b>During Competition</b>	Receive and sort applications into folders
	Screen applications to ensure eligibility
	Contact applicants who are not eligible and some who are eligible but have issues that need clarification
<b>Close of Competition</b>	Photocopy applications – one copy for HQ; one for regional offices
	Send applications to Directors to select two evaluators (usually one in HQ, one in RO) and send applications to evaluators
	Review comments from evaluators, looking for contradictory views/advice
	Contact evaluators to discuss contradictory views, where necessary
	Present preliminary results to F&A SPS for making final decision
	Edit, cut and paste comments into a cohesive document for each applicant
	Send comments for translation, if necessary
	Prepare acceptance, conditional acceptance or rejection letters with comments for applicants
	Present letters to F&A SPS for approval
	E-mail comments to selected candidates
	After results are announced, prepare comments for candidates who have not been selected and wish to reapply
	Reply to questions regarding change of field research dates, change or addition of field research countries, clarifications on evaluator's comments
	At the time of re-applications, verify that re-applicants have received the evaluators' comments so that they can integrate them into the revised proposal.

63. Since the IDRA program is the largest awards program administered by F&A, considerable attention is given below to how these are managed. While the other programs are smaller, they follow more or less the same administrative procedures and most of the recommendations made for improving the administration of the IDRA awards are equally valid for them.

### Calls for Applications

64. The IDRA awards are announced twice annually with submission deadlines on April 1 (award announcement in September) and on November 1 (award announcement in May.)

## **Processing of Applications**

65. IDRA receives from 120-140 applications annually. Administration of the applications is labour intensive and each call requires approximately five months of work for a program management officer in addition to considerable time of a program assistant. For example, it takes about 3.5 days simply to photocopy the 60+ applications received for each competition. Table 6 provides a detailed list of the tasks undertaken over the five month period. All F&A staff spend time responding to questions about awards (the program assistant estimates this can take up to two hours per day during peak periods.)

## **Selection Process**

66. IDRA applications are evaluated by relevant program staff at headquarters and in the regions. The time taken to review the applications varies from two to three hours up to one day per application. The evaluation forms are entirely subjective and it is quite common for two IDRC evaluators to provide contradictory opinions. F&A staff attempt to reconcile contradictory comments before they are sent to the candidates. The evaluations themselves vary. Some evaluators provide detailed discussions while others provide only short responses.

67. All POs, both in Ottawa and in ESARO said that they liked reviewing the IDRA applications. The research proposals often address new issues and POs find it intellectually rewarding to remain involved. Also, POs usually have detailed and up to date knowledge of local research environments and research institutions, far beyond that of most Canada-based university professors. Thus IDRC POs are more likely to know whether the affiliate institutions chosen by IDRA candidates are solid, whether budgets are realistic, whether the political situation in the country favours the type of research proposed, or whether the timing and season of the research is appropriate.

68. However some POs said that the IDRA applications usually come without warning and they had not allocated time for them with the consequence that it is often stressful to complete them in a timely manner. It was suggested that F&A should send announcements at the beginning of each year indicating exactly when the IDRA applications would be sent for review. Many POs do not give the applications priority and despite sending reminders, F&A staff often has to wait for weeks or even months before receiving all the evaluations. Moreover directors sometimes assign program staff proposals on topics in which they do not have specialized expertise. In such cases, the proposals usually are sent back to F&A for redistribution. It is sometimes difficult to find second reviewers, forcing F&A to rely on a single evaluation. This can pose ethical problems as an award is normally offered only when two evaluators have given a positive review.

## **Follow-Up with Candidates and Evaluators**

69. F&A sends reviewer comments to selected IDRA candidates, seeing this as a useful learning experience for candidates. Comments are also sent to rejected candidates if a request is made for them or if the candidates have been encouraged to re-apply. This takes considerable time since the comments of evaluators can be contradictory and are sometimes written in imperfect English or French. F&A makes corrections as necessary and then sends a cut and pasted version to candidates. Among the other awards-granting institutions approached, only IFS provides comments. Most see this as too time-consuming.

70. Although it posts the results on *Echonet*, F&A does not inform evaluators personally when the final selections have been made. Many PSs mentioned that they would like to be informed of the results. (It

probably would be sufficient for them to receive a personal e-mail with a link to the list of successful candidates.)

## **SOUTHERN JUNIOR RESEARCHER AWARDS (SJRA)**

71. The Southern Junior Researcher Awards (SJRA) are the only southern-based awards directly managed by F&A. They were established in Eastern and Southern Africa on a pilot basis in late 2007. For the three years of the pilot phase, the projects were funded under the annual umbrella F&A Corporate Awards Project. From 2009 they were treated as individual projects. This was done to achieve for greater visibility and uniformity with other IDRC projects.

72. In 2009 and 2010, two Francophone institutions were added: Institut supérieur des sciences de la population (ISSP) at the University of Ouagadougou for 39 full study MA awards in health policy and health systems research and Nouveau programme de troisième cycle universitaire (NPTCI) en économie, also in Ouagadougou for 18 doctoral research awards in economic studies. In the initial years of each project, F&A has reviewed the calls for applications and provided advice. This has been highly appreciated by project leaders because of the lengthy experience of F&A.

73. Overall, 13 grants have been made under SJRA, to nine African institutions, all of which disburse grants either on a pan-African or regional basis. Ultimately, the disbursements will total CAD\$6,782,823 and more than 260 grants will be given. F&A will provide \$5,435,123 of the total and \$1,347,700 has been provided by the Governance, Equity and Health and Acacia programs

74. For this evaluation, five SJRA recipients were visited:

- University for Peace (UPEACE) Africa Programme, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (*Project 103902-073/Project 105407-041*) (<http://www.africa.upeace.org/>)
- Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Kampala, Uganda (*Project 105809*) (<http://www.ruforum.org/>)
- University of Nairobi, School of Computing and Informatics, Nairobi, Kenya (*Project 104655-086*) ([http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/faculties/index.php?itemno=31&fac\\_code=52](http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/faculties/index.php?itemno=31&fac_code=52))
- African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya (*Project 104655-039/Project 105407-048/Project 106206*) (<http://www.aphrc.org/>)
- African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Nairobi, Kenya (*Project 103902-072*) (<http://www.aercafrica.org/home/index.asp>)  
Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE), Nairobi, Kenya (*Project 104655-028*) (<http://www.agricultureconomics.net/home/home.asp?00=1>)

75. The five institutions all have different approaches to granting and monitoring the fellowships they award under the SJRA program but they are unanimous in considering them to be a significant vehicle for building greater human resource capacity in their field. Interviews with researchers in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya strongly reconfirm the continuing importance and relevance of doctoral training awards in the region. Some argued that MA/MSc degrees continue to be of equal importance while others felt there was a greater need for PhD level training. It was mentioned that due to the large number of private universities that are appearing in many African countries, there is still a huge unmet need for trained faculty members. Details pertaining to the different institutions are discussed below but a number of observations are common to all of them.

## Francophone and Lusophone participation

76. Francophone participation has proved to be challenging for all the East Africa-based institutions. While they all have made efforts to involve Francophones in their training programs, in most cases the onus has been on the Francophones to participate in English language workshops and training seminars. Several institutions mentioned that they had been unaware of the high cost of translation and had not included this in their original budgets. In at least one case, they turned to IDRC for a “final check” to ensure that French language documentation put on the web was correct (e.g. call for applications). Lusophone participation has been minimal. One institution (Tshwane University of Technology) was unable to attract Lusophone applicants despite special efforts.

77. UPEACE has given the issue of Francophone participation some thought and proposed that a special sensitization effort be undertaken. They plan to visit a selected number of universities in Francophone Africa, in particular those that were affected or are still affected by conflicts (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, The Central African Republic, Mali and Niger). They have submitted a separate proposal to IDRC to address this issue in a concerted manner over 36 months. They estimate a cost of more than US\$340,000 to cover salary for a bilingual research coordinator and research assistant, translation of documents and simultaneous interpretation at research training workshops.

### Gender balance

78. None of the SJRA institutions has achieved gender parity and in most cases they have not even reached 30 percent female participation. Although all the institution directors stated their commitment to increasing the participation of women, only AERC has developed a plan or strategy to make this happen. AERC has achieved 29 percent overall participation of women in its awards, but the representation of women is highest in the agricultural economics area (which has the smallest number of awards). AERC has set a target of 50/50. They have recently developed a gender strategy and are considering setting up a special fund to support scholarships for women. They are also thinking about having remedial courses for less qualified women and then providing support for them to do MA and PhD degrees.

#### Box2: Building Scientific Capacity in Africa

Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics (PI), in Waterloo, Ontario, is a leading international centre for research in foundational physics. PI has recently launched a Global Outreach program, with the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) in Cape Town, South Africa. The AIMS Next Einstein Initiative (NEI) seeks to create a network of 15 AIMS centres by 2020, graduating 750 scientists and technologists per annum. PI Global Outreach serves as the North American coordinating partner for AIMS-NEI, facilitating the participation of other public and private partners in that endeavour. In July 2010, Canada invested CAD\$20 million in this endeavour. This high impact investment leverages Perimeter Institute’s expertise to build upon the success of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) in Cape Town, South Africa. Canada’s lead investment will help support the establishment of a network of five AIMS centres across Africa by 2015. Year over year, the centres will graduate African scientists with the skills needed to tackle development challenges and seize opportunities for innovation and growth.



## **Electronic Application and Selection Processes**

79. Of the five institutions visited, only the University of Nairobi has a totally digitized application and selection process. Most of the others have partial electronic processes, accepting applications electronically but insisting on submission of hard copies of supporting documents. Most directors argued that connectivity is not sufficiently stable in many African countries to make a totally electronic process viable at this time. However, discussions with the Executive Director of OSSREA (Organization for Social Sciences Research in Eastern and Southern Africa) which is based in Addis Ababa and runs small grants competitions throughout the region, suggested otherwise. OSSREA does most of its work online and they ask for PDF copies of documents. Jurors evaluate proposals online and are paid to do so in a timely and professional manner. OSSREA has an in-house “quality control” committee that looks at applications in the so-called “gray zone,” i.e. applications that were rejected or accepted by a small margin. The committee also checks for country and political biases.

## **Selection Committee Members as Mentors**

80. Several programs brought selection committee members to research methods workshops to act as instructors but also to develop mentoring relationships with students. Mentoring was mentioned as an important mechanism by some directors. IDRC support in developing guidelines for mentors would be very useful.

## **Supervisors**

81. The quality and reliability of supervision for students was a common problem. Since staff at most African universities are poorly paid, they often look for additional sources of income. Consequently they devote less time for student supervision which in turn means that students are often delayed for months or even years before they can complete their requirements for graduation. One student at Makerere University mentioned that she had completed the final draft of her thesis in June but by mid-October she still had not received comments from her supervisor. Some institutions have handled this problem by offering payment to supervisors but even this has not proved totally satisfactory. The approaches of the institutions vary widely but none was completely satisfied with the responsiveness of supervisors. This may be an issue that F&A could explore further in collaboration with the Centre’s Think Tank Initiative. It relates to the academic culture in African universities.

## **IDRC Visibility**

82. Of the five programs only the APHRC website gives visibility to the IDRC support for its scholarship programs. UPeace shows a Canadian flag to symbolize IDRC support but does not mention the Centre by name. The other programs do not directly acknowledge IDRC support.

## **Sustainability**

83. None of the programs had thought seriously about how to continue operating when IDRC support ends. The UPEACE is making plans for a post-IDRC joint PhD program with the University of Victoria but they have not found financial support. There is some talk of offering peace and conflict courses at the UPEACE Africa Programme headquarters in Addis on a private payment basis but this has not been

explored in detail. Most of the institutions would welcome IDRC assistance in sourcing support from other donors.

### **University for Peace (UPeace) Africa Programme, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

(<http://www.africa.upeace.org/>)

*Total Funds Received from F&A: CAD\$826,225.*

*Output: 22 Doctoral Research Awards, 4 Full Study PhDs*

84. The Africa Programme of the Costa Rica-based University for Peace has been working with F&A since 2007, two years after the Programme office opened in Addis Ababa. The Programme is focussed on peace research capacity building and has partnerships with 22 universities around Africa. They also work with COMESA and IGAD and are currently negotiating an agreement with the East African Community (EAC). In addition, they work closely with civil society, e.g. Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), an international NGO set up in 1996 to facilitate and promote the role of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. UPEACE wants to work with FAS to establish an MA in Gender and Peace building at the University of Dakar and are currently searching for funding for this purpose.

85. The IDRC support has included PhD fellowships, doctoral awards and workshops aimed at peace researchers and award holders. There are few peace and conflict studies PhD programs in Africa, and the IDRC awards are making an important contribution to building up a cadre of trained specialist researchers. MA programs are starting to be developed in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa and graduates from the UPeace Africa programme will provide an important source of trained human resources to teach in such programs.

86. The F&A support to UPeace is complementary to the Centre's ***Building Peace and Security Research Capacity in Eastern Africa*** Project (#104617, CAD \$ 710,700). That project aims to create a network of peace and security researchers from academic institutions, research centres and civil society organizations. Through research, information dissemination and dialogue, the network will inform policy, mediate political conflicts, and prevent the initiation and escalation of violent conflict.

### **Training workshops**

87. Three training workshops were held in 2008 and 2009. Their purpose was to provide people already working in peace and conflict with analytical skills and knowledge to enable them to engage in research in addition to their normal activities. Successful PhD fellows and doctoral award candidates also participated and there was good interaction between the doctoral students and practising researchers.

### **PhD Fellowships**

88. In the first year (2008), they received 19 applications for Ph.D. fellowships, seven from women. They selected two candidates, one male, one female. In the second year they received 43 applications, 10 from women. Two male candidates were selected.

### **Doctoral Awards**

89. In their first call, they received 24 applications for doctoral awards, including six from women. Only two candidates were selected, although it had been intended to make 10 awards. The majority of the applications came from unqualified candidates. In the second call, a few months later they advertised more widely and gave a longer time for responses (three months instead of one month). They received 94 applications (73 from males, 21 from females). Eight candidates were selected, including two women.

In the second year of doctoral awards, they received 46 applications, including nine from women. They awarded 13 grants, nine to men, four to women.

90. In general, the average age of the doctoral awardees is rather high. In 2008 it was 37.2. Three were 40 or older and the oldest was 47. In 2009, it was 38.6. Six candidates were 40 or older. Given that the normal retirement age in African universities and government departments tends to be around 60, candidates in their mid to late 40s will have only a decade or so left in the workplace.

## **Administrative Procedures**

### **Calls**

91. Calls for applications are placed on the UPeace website, posted on several development-oriented websites and advertised in regional newspapers (e.g. The East African). The calls are also sent to each university in the UPeace network but only two or three have actually placed them on their websites. The numbers of applications for PhD fellowships and doctoral research awards increased substantially when the application time was increased from one month to three months and later to four months.

### **Applications**

92. Applications are sent electronically and in hard copy. Web-based application procedures are considered to be too challenging because of connectivity problems in many African countries, including Ethiopia.

### **Selection Process**

93. Selection committees consist of 10-15 people, including UPeace staff. Usually five to six members come from outside Africa, the remainder from Africa. Outside evaluators have been brought from Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. It is considered that the amount of documentation attached to each dossier is too much to be sent by email.

94. The reliance on external evaluators has been considered necessary to establish the international credibility of the program. Moreover, outside evaluators are also expected to become mentors to students and some have taught in the workshops attached to the fellowship program. UPeace seems to use more foreign experts from outside Africa than the other programs. Although this has some positive aspects, it is also very expensive and if they only stay for a few days, of questionable value. This is especially true when these experts have little knowledge of Africa

95. In general, the administrative procedures have run smoothly. The only problem that has emerged has been with the timing of project deliverables. Awardees do not always finish promptly and UPeace has little control over this.

96. UPeace has benefitted greatly from the IDRC support, both because it has further enhanced the research strand of their work and because UPeace has benefitted from IDRC's good reputation, by association. F&A shared its expertise in managing competitive awards at the beginning of the project, and UPeace can now work independently. The relationship with IDRC staff in ESARO and HQ has been uniformly positive. Some IDRC staff participated in training seminars and this was greatly appreciated by the doctoral fellows. There is a strong desire to continue when the current grant ends.

97. With IDRC support UPeace has also established ***The Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*** which is helping to create an African literature on peace and conflict studies. All doctoral research students and researchers supported by the IDRC funding are encouraged to publish in the journal.

### **Looking Ahead at UPeace**

98. Plans for 2011 are to create closer links with the universities that host the awardees to better understand their study environment and create stronger relationships with supervisors. The vision for UPEACE within ten years is to become a centre of excellence in Africa for peace and conflict studies. This will include the creation of:

- a viable resource centre that pulls together global electronic resources on peace and conflict studies;
- a strong Africa-wide network of peace and conflict researchers; and
- a place where peace and conflict researchers and practitioners can come and take short courses to refresh their knowledge, learn new skills or methodologies and/or spend a sabbatical term.

### **Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Kampala, Uganda (<http://www.ruforum.org/>)**

*Total Funds Received from F&A: CAD\$577,900*

*Output: 20 Doctoral Research Awards granted; 8 remain to be granted*

99. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a consortium of 25 universities in Eastern and Southern Africa, was established in 2004. The consortium began in 1992 as a program of the Rockefeller Foundation. RUFORUM has a mandate to oversee graduate training and networks of specialization in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries. Specifically, RUFORUM recognizes the important and largely unfulfilled role that universities play in contributing to the well-being of small-scale farmers and economic development of countries throughout the sub-Saharan Africa region.

100. RUFORUM has trained 560 MPhil/ MSc students since 1992. Their program emphasizes skill enhancement, preparing students to work in development or in agri-business. RUFORUM has developed a number of strategic partnerships with national research institutions and NGOs. Through these partnerships students interact with farmers and other stakeholders. They participate in workshops and some have three month internships. RUFORUM has developed a number of innovative approaches to training but in practice it has proved difficult to implement some of them because of the type of rote learning that students were exposed to in their earlier education.

101. Under the IDRC support, RUFORUM is providing 28 fellowships at the PhD level. The program started in September 2009 and to date they have awarded 20 grants, five of them to women. They have set a target of 38 percent of their scholarships for women but they are not yet able to meet the target. All of the fellowship recipients are already employed, which is consistent with one of RUFORUM's objectives, which is to strengthen research capacity in African universities. RUFORUM currently also receives support from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) to support 20 PhD scholarships.

## **Administrative Procedures**

### **Calls**

102. Calls for applications are placed on the RUFORUM website and circulated to universities in the RUFORUM network.

### **Applications**

103. Applications are accepted electronically and in hard copy.

### **Selection Process**

104. Fellowship recipients are selected by a 12 person technical committee. Committee members (six men and six women), are based at regional universities and other institutions. They review applications electronically and three to four of them are brought to a face to face meeting to make the final decisions. Committee members receive \$200 to come to meetings and \$50 for each proposal that they review.

### **Supervisors**

105. RUFORUM has tried to overcome the problem of slow responses from supervisors by offering them \$1200 for supervising their awardees and additional funding to enable them to monitor students in the field. However, students still complain of slow response times from supervisors.

### **E-learning**

106. Uniquely among the five institutions, RUFORUM is investing heavily in the development of e-learning modules. In 2009 they undertook an assessment of the e-learning readiness of 25 universities in the region (<http://www.ruforum.org/documents/report-ict-situation-analysis-25-ruforum-universities>), and efforts are now being made to train teaching staff on the use of webtools, skype, wiki, and social networking. They are working with universities to develop content and have organized writing workshops. This work is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Looking Ahead at RUFORUM**

107. By 2020, RUFORUM would like to ensure that some universities in the region offer international quality post graduate programs in agriculture. Several universities in Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Uganda have the potential to reach this goal in at least some areas of research.

### **University of Nairobi, School of Computing and Informatics, Nairobi, Kenya**

([http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/faculties/index.php?itemno=31&fac\\_code=52](http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/faculties/index.php?itemno=31&fac_code=52))

*Total Funds Received from F&A: CAD\$466,878 (F&A \$380,078; ACACIA \$86,800)*

*Output: 8 Doctoral Research Awards and 4 Full Study M.Sc. awards*

108. The IDRC support is aimed at capacity building in ICTs and development, and provides sponsorship to PhD and MSc students in 24 eligible countries in the region. MSc students are supported full-time for two years while doctoral award students receive support for their research expenses. Most students come from schools of computer science but some are drawn from schools of education and

management. So far they have completed one round and eight doctoral research awards and four MSc students have been supported. In early 2010, the awardees participated in a week long research methodology and scientific writing workshop in Nairobi. Four University of Nairobi doctoral students who were not part of the IDRC program were also allowed to participate in the workshop.

## **Administrative Procedures**

### **Calls**

109. Electronic announcements in English and French were sent to 35 universities and numerous virtual networks in Eastern and Southern Africa. A project website with all requisite information was constructed and put online in July 2009 (<http://www.ict4dgrants.org>).

### **Applications**

110. Seventy- three applications were received from 20 countries, 61 for the MSc awards and 12 for the doctoral research awards. Approximately 25 percent of the applications came from female candidates. Applications were web-based and students were able to attach their c.v.s and other documents in PDF or Word documents form. Critical information in the forms was entered into a central database which could be accessed by members of the selection committee. The use of electronic submissions created some challenges in ascertaining the authenticity of documents but this was considered to be a small inconvenience in comparison to the greater efficiency of the electronic method. To some extent, the same problems can occur with hard copies of documents.

### **Selection Process**

111. Final selections were made by a committee of five experts situated in different parts of the world. This was done electronically and there was no physical meeting. Each committee member was paid CAD\$1000 and marked applications according to evaluation criteria that had been developed by the project leader and then sent to committee members for comments and input. The selection committee members participated physically in the research methodology and scientific writing workshop as both instructors and mentors. After the workshop, a blog was created to enable the mentors/ facilitators to continue to communicate with students.

### **Supervisors**

112. The MSc supervisors will be paid a fee of CAD\$1,000 in two instalments; one in the middle and the other at the end of the research after submission of the final reports. No payments will be made to PhD research supervisors.

### **Relationship with IDRC**

113. The relationship with IDRC has been good although there has been a delay with the disbursement of the second tranche. The delay was caused because the University of Nairobi submitted their last financial report in US\$ rather than local KES, as was agreed in the contract. This led to overspending and took time to sort out.

### **Looking Ahead**

114. If the grants program were to continue, by 2020, the following could be achieved:

- Tens or even hundreds of PhD graduates who are providing leadership in academia and industry across Africa
- Many ICT4D innovations that have been created by awardees
- Innumerable publications in refereed journals by awardees
- Increased university - industry collaboration
- Several centres of excellence in ICT4D in Africa

### **African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya**

(<http://www.aphrc.org/>)

*Total Funds Received from F&A: CAD\$3,297,800 (three projects). F&A: \$2,234,700. GEH: \$1,063,100*

*Output: 106 Doctoral Research Awards*

115. The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is a pan-African, non-profit, international NGO that conducts policy-relevant research on population, health, and education issues in sub-Saharan Africa. APHRC also promotes the use of research evidence in policy and practice and strengthens the capacity of African scholars and institutions to conduct research and undertake policy analysis. Currently in Africa, only South Africa has a strong cadre of health systems researchers.

116. IDRC has supported the African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship (ADDRF) program since 2008. IDRC support goes to health systems research. The Ford Foundation also contributes to support sexuality-related research. The objectives of the fellowships are to facilitate more rigorous engagement of doctoral students in research, to strengthen their research skills and enhance the quality of their dissertations, and to shorten the period it takes to complete doctoral dissertations at African universities. Table 7 below provides an overview of the doctoral research fellowships that have been awarded to date. Eight were funded by Ford, the remainder by IDRC for health systems research.

**Table 7: ADDRf Beneficiaries, 2008-10**

	2008	2009	2010
<b>Number of students supported</b>	20	26	23
<b>Ph.D. thesis submitted/ defended</b>	17	8	-
<b>Papers accepted/ published</b>	13	14	1
<b>Conference presentations (oral/ poster)</b>	46	28	-
<b>Countries represented</b>	7	13	10
<b>Universities represented</b>	14	15	14
<b>Gender</b>	M 9 F 10	M 16 F 10	M 13 F 10

### **Administrative Procedures**

#### **Calls**

117. Calls for the ADDRf awards are posted on the APHRC website, circulated to African universities and sent to different networks and partners. Typically they receive around 150 applications for each call, the majority coming from

Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. The highest number of Francophone applications come from Cameroon. They would like to increase their numbers of Francophone applicants but bilingualism continues to be a challenge, since the training programs associated with the awards are conducted in English.

### **Applications**

118. Applications are accepted both electronically and in hard copy, although the preference is for electronic applications. Each application is sent to three reviewers, some of whom may be APHRC staff.

Outside reviewers are paid an honorarium of \$750. Reviewers evaluate the candidate's background, the quality of the research being proposed and the environment in which the candidate will be working.

### **Selection Process**

119. When a short list has been compiled, approximately seven reviewers are brought to APHRC, together with a few staff members, and an IDRC representative, to make the final selection. Successful candidates have to commit to complete their work within two years and to submit a paper for publication. The maximum grant is CAD\$15,000 but most receive less.

### **Supervisors**

120. In the second and third calls, supervisors have been asked to submit their c.v.'s as part of the student application. This is intended as a quality check to ensure students will be supervised by professors with appropriate training and background. Although supervisors do not get paid directly, their departments receive a facilitation grant of CAD\$1000. This is intended to be used to bring in an external reviewer. Students complain that supervisors are often very slow to review their work.

### **Training Workshops**

121. Each cohort of students participates in two one-week workshops. One workshop focuses on research methodology and the other on scientific writing. Some students come from universities where there are no coursework offerings and therefore the training workshops are important sources of learning for them. Most students are unable to access e-journals because of slow connectivity speeds but there has been some discussion of providing training for librarians in the use of e-resources.

### **Relationship with IDRC**

122. The interaction with IDRC has been good. They have received regular feedback and been given assistance with French translations. Ideally they would like to broaden the fellowships awards program and they would like IDRC help in approaching other donors. They also would like to have more interaction with other IDRC grantees and perhaps send their francophone trainees to French language research training workshops supported by IDRC.

### **Looking Ahead for APHRC**

123. By 2020 they hope that their fellowship awardees will have published numerous articles based on their dissertation work. They would like to see African researchers moving away from consulting and competing for international research grants. Ideally some of their graduates will become agents of change in the health sector in Africa and some will become ambassadors for their program.

**African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Nairobi, Kenya**  
(<http://www.aercafrica.org/home/index.asp>) /Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE), Nairobi, Kenya  
(<http://www.agricultureconomics.net/home/home.asp?00=1>)

*AERC Total Funds Received from F&A: CAD\$417,900*  
*Output: 14 Doctoral Research Awards, 4 Full Study PhDs*  
*CMAAE Total Funds Received from F&A: CAD\$100,000*



#### *Output: 4 Full Study MAs*

124. The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), established in 1988 with IDRC support, is a public not-for-profit organization devoted to the advancement of economic policy research and training. AERC's mission is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa. AERC's training programme is designed to augment the pool of economic researchers in sub-Saharan Africa by supporting post-graduate studies in economics and by enhancing the capacities of departments of economics in local public universities. AERC supports the Collaborative master's Programme in Economics (CMAPE) for Anglophone Africa (excluding Nigeria and South Africa) and has recently embarked on a similar Collaborative PhD Programme in Economics for sub-Saharan Africa. The collaboration features joint enforcement of standards through annual evaluation and assessment by external examiners, a common curriculum and its development, a joint facility for teaching electives, and joint development of teaching materials.

125. IDRC has a long history with AERC and currently is supporting several training initiatives. Under the terms of Project 103902-072 that runs from December 2007-November 2011, F&A provided 14 doctoral research awards and four full study PhD awards. All the awards have been granted. A proposal for Ph II funding has already been submitted to F&A.

126. In November 2007, F&A also committed to support four MA students in the newly-established Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) which aims to:

- Equip professionals with knowledge and skills essential for transforming the agro food sectors and rural economies of the region in an environmentally sustainable fashion.
- Produce graduates conversant with problems facing the agricultural sector in Africa and with the capability to provide practical solutions to meet the millennium development goals.
- Set up a system for upgrading of the teaching and research capacity of faculties in the participating departments; and
- Enhance a collaborative network amongst the many players in agricultural economics and related disciplines in agriculture to undertake research to inform relevant policy.

The CMAAE program has now become part of AERC and currently includes 15 universities in 12 countries of eastern, central and southern Africa. IDRC is supporting four students (all male) of the 20 who were included in the first intake.

### **Administrative Procedures**

#### **Calls**

127. Both the AERC and the CMAAE award calls are posted on the AERC website. They are announced at all AERC events and are mentioned by AERC staff on their frequent monitoring visits to universities. There is no specific deadline for submissions of applications. Decisions are made twice yearly, in June and December.

#### **Applications**

128. Applications are accepted electronically or in hard copy, but the preference is for electronic copies.

### **Selection Procedures**

129. If applications are complete they are sent to two reviewers, usually based in Africa. Reviewers provide comments that are shared with the applicants. Applicants then send revised proposals which go back to the original reviewers. Reviewers are paid US\$100 for each review (at the end of the process). When reviews are completed, they are compiled and examined by the AERC training sub-committee. This committee, which is composed of AERC staff and outside experts, meets twice yearly. They discuss the revised proposals and send them forward to the program committee (also composed of AERC staff and outside experts) with their comments, for the final selection of successful candidates. Once a candidate has been selected, his/her budget is examined in greater detail by the Secretariat before a letter of award is prepared.

### **Supervisors**

130. The awards administered by AERC do not include compensation for supervisors of doctoral research awards. They do include some institutional support for other awards. AERC staff makes regular monitoring visits to universities and try to meet with students and supervisors although they cannot reach all of them.

### **Relationship with IDRC**

131. Generally the relationship has been smooth. There was a misunderstanding about the allocation of funds to students under the AERC and CMMAE grants but this was quickly resolved. The main question now is whether IDRC will support further support for the program.

132. ESARO staff noted that the four recipients of the IDRC- CMMAE grants were unaware that the grants originated from IDRC, although it was agreed with all SJRA partners that the contracts granted to the award holders would refer to the awards as the "Institution (e.g. AERC) – IDRC Doctoral Research Awards/PhD Fellowships." In the case of a large and well-known training program, like that of AERC, it is not surprising that students tend to think their grants come from AERC resources. It is important for IDRC to state in the Memorandum of Grant Conditions that students should be informed of their support.

### **SRJA Lessons Learned**

133. The University of KwaZulu Natal originally participated in the SJRA awards. Initially five doctoral research awards were to be granted as part of the Centre's ecohealth research capacity building, but response to the call was poor and ultimately only one grant was made for a total of CAD\$15,820. The program seems to have failed for a number of reasons: i) the project was hastily conceived; ii) due to time constraints and the fact that university staff already had visited IDRC to discuss the project, F&A program staff did not make a site visit to evaluate institutional commitment and environment; iii) the call for applications was hasty and narrow; iv) the original doctoral supervisors at the university moved into other jobs; and v) the collaborating program officer from IDRC moved into another program area. The result of all these factors was that the student suffered considerable delays in receiving her money and completing her research. Most significantly, this case underscores the need for IDRC staff, ideally

F&A staff, to undertake an institutional analysis and ensure the strong commitment of key faculty members to participating in a SJRA awards program.

## SRJA Questions for Consideration

134. Table 7 below provides as overview of the unit costs (cost per student) involved in training under the SJRA project. This table provides only a very rough indication as it mixes doctoral research awards and full study PhD and MA/MSc awards which are much more costly. Moreover, it makes no allowances for the administration/ overhead costs that are factored into the total IDRC grants.

**Table 8: SJRA Training Costs per Student in CAD**

Institution	IDRC Funds Received	Type of Training	Average Unit Cost of Training
UPeace	826,225.	22 Doctoral Research Awards 4 Full Study PhDs	31,778.
RUFORUM	577,900	28 Doctoral Research Awards	20,639
University of Nairobi	466,878	8 Doctoral Research Awards 4 Full Study MScs	38,906
APHRC	3,297,800	106 Doctoral Research Awards	31,111
AERC	417,900	14 Doctoral Research Awards 4 Full Study PhDs	23,216
CMAAE	100,000	4 Full Study MAs	25,000

135. All the five SJRA institutions discussed above have developed effective administrative systems for managing their grants. None seemed to be facing serious problems. However, there are some important differences in the way that they operate and it would be useful for F&A to organize a conference or stocktaking

workshop to compare and discuss the different models that have been tried by SJRA partners, to draw out lessons learned and to strategize about sustainability for research capacity development in the region. Such a meeting would also allow opportunity to explore further the digitization of training processes, discuss the potential for e-learning, for scientific entrepreneurship and for internship opportunities.

136. The meeting could feed into the creation of a community of practice around F&A, in IDRC, in partnership institutions, and with other donors or institutions that support research training in the South. Some of the specific differences among SJRA institutions that could be discussed include the following:

- The University of Nairobi has moved furthest towards digitalization, but this is not surprising given that the project is based in the School of Computing and Informatics.
- AERC has tried to address the issue of gender balance and has developed a policy.
- UPeace has given serious consideration to the inclusion of Francophones in its programs.
- RUFORUM has placed students in internships and has interacted with the agribusiness sector
- APHRC has developed strong linkages with institutions all over Africa and is thriving as a stand-alone African research institution

- Issues of financial management, payment to evaluators, payment to supervisors etc. could also be discussed

## **PART II: NEW DIRECTIONS**

### **New Directions for F&A**

#### **Vision**

137. Rather than being primarily an administrative function, F&A should add an important dimension to the profile that IDRC presents to the world. Perhaps because of the lack of a single vision for the program, there is no common practice for the review of competitions, evaluation and identification of lessons learned. Because of the high level of administrative activity and work overload, F&A does not currently have capacity to analyse its own activities and to identify “lessons learned.”

138. A starting point for the reorganization of F&A is the development of a new vision, the setting of priorities, and of short, medium and long-term goals. F&A should take a leadership role in pushing forward thinking about fellowships and awards. For example, it could

- ask questions about the continuing role of fellowships and awards in building research capacity in developing countries.
- consider the costs and benefits of different approaches to training, including certificate courses, diplomas, etc. and consider the new possibilities that can be introduced through e-learning.
- try to influence others with the development of innovative approaches to training and the identification of critical new areas for training.
- create learning communities by using the networking skills for which IDRC is known.

139. The innovative approaches developed by IDRC’s Evaluation Unit provide a good example of what could be done by F&A and how a program that has been considered a “service” function can move to a position of intellectual leadership around its core issues.

#### **Funding and Human Resources**

140. F&A lacks sustained funding to allow it to focus on longer term capacity building or sustained innovative approaches. With an annual budget of only \$3.5 million, the program has chosen to put relatively small amounts of money in many different areas.

141. A second problem relates to human resources. With only one SPS, it has proved difficult to undertake regular monitoring or to visit all institutions before placing awards programs with them. This was the main reason for the lack of success with the Kwa Zulu Natal SJRA program. Similarly it has not been possible to visit Canadian universities on a regular basis to promote the IDRA and other awards and it has been difficult to follow-up on a regular basis with awardees and to do tracer studies.

Moreover, it has been hard for F&A to develop partnerships with other organizations that are involved with training.

142. Ideally, F&A should have two to three program specialists, at least one based in a regional office. For F&A to move beyond the administrative function that it now occupies, it will need more trained human resources and possibly a higher budget. Possibly, one of the F&A programme management officer positions could be upgraded to program specialist status. With a second program specialist, F&A would have the capacity to undertake more innovative work.

## **Relationship of F&A with Other Centre Programs**

143. Although F&A is highly regarded by most PSs, they have little idea of its activities beyond the IDRA and research internship awards and they regard F&A as a service program. While it is not necessary or even feasible for F&A to manage all training awards, it should be mandatory for all programs to inform F&A of their training activities. This would ensure that F&A has complete records of all training awards which in turn would enhance the Centre's profile. In some cases F&A could include trainees supported directly by programs in its ongoing value added activities such as methodology workshops or networking events. If F&A invests greater effort into creating alumni lists and alumni activities, better records would enable them to ensure that program-supported trainees are included.

144. Regional program officers interviewed in ESARO tended to have little knowledge about the programs and awards offered by F&A. Moreover, regional program officers often have little knowledge of the Canadian university system. This is important because many programs include training components in their projects and RPOs are sometimes in a position to recommend universities or training programs to researchers in their projects. F&A should take a leadership role in providing them with some information, possibly in form of a website that provides a "quick guide" to Canadian universities and graduate training. This task could be contracted out to a consultant.

145. Although F&A has indicated an interest in collaboration, it does not currently have a close relationship with IDRC's multi-million dollar Think Tank initiative. There seem to be important areas of complementarity. The Think Tank Initiative is supporting 24 institutions in Africa and includes targeted training and capacity building which is not coordinated with F&A training. Discussions with ESARO Think Tank staff suggested that if internship possibilities can be developed as part of the SJRA awards, some researchers based at Centre-supported Think Tanks could also participate. There may be other areas for collaboration.

## **New Directions for the IDRA Awards**

### **Choice of Research Topics**

146. While there is an argument to be made for continuing to support open IDRA awards on topics chosen by the applicants, it may be strategically more useful for the Centre to tie at least half of the awards to topics that more closely reflect its ongoing or emerging areas of research interest. IDRC has always tried to identify and work on emerging areas in development research. Doctoral students at Canadian universities often are engaged in this type of research, helping to develop new fields. If the Centre were to stipulate that a proportion of awards each year would be given on specific topics that relate to its own strategic planning process, over time it would foster cutting edge work that would directly benefit to its programming. Topics could be kept broad enough to allow analysis from different

disciplines. For example, current topics like “globalization, growth and poverty” or “climate change and water” could be examined from the perspective of economists, sociologists, education specialists, health scientists, environmentalists, engineers, etc. Another benefit of this approach is that it would create cohorts of young Canada-based researchers who have expertise on topics of interest to the Centre.

### **Dissemination of Results and Networking**

147. If a proportion of the IDRA awards addressed topics of strategic concern to the Centre then it would be useful to organize an annual research meeting with IDRC program staff and successful candidates working on those topics. Candidates would be invited to participate towards the end of their award periods so that they are able to report on their fieldwork. This would provide Centre staff with new findings that could feed directly into their programming and it would allow the IDRA awardees to network among themselves. Such a meeting would expose them to alternative disciplinary approaches to the common area of focus and could lead to multidisciplinary work among them in the future.

### **Simplification of applications**

148. The Centre’s new web-based grants submission system is expected to be operational within the next few months and it should be possible to simplify the application process. The current 18 page bilingual application form is complex and bureaucratic. In addition to the form, candidates are required to send proposals of 15-20 pages, abstracts, budgets, c.v.’s, two original signed reference letters, an original letter from the institution where they will be based in the South, an original letter from their research supervisor approving the research proposal, an official transcript and proof of citizenship/permanent residency. There seems to be considerable duplication of information.

149. F&A should design a simple standard application format that can be filled out online. Forms should be available separately in French and in English. Research proposals should be limited to about 10 pages maximum and should be attached in PDF format. Candidates should also be asked to include a one page executive summary rather than an abstract.<sup>6</sup> An executive summary would include a brief description of the research question, the methodology and the affiliate institution where the work will be carried out.

### **Streamlining of administration**

150. The IDRA awards are given twice annually. If they were given only once a year then the administrative burden associated with them would be reduced. If research proposals were shorter, it would be easier to read them on-line. Photocopying of proposals should be the choice of the evaluator and should not be done in advance by F&A.

### **Outsourcing of administration**

160. SSHRC, AUCC or CBIE all would be able to manage the IDRA competitions on behalf of F&A. All have considerable experience in doing this for various government departments. The cost of this option should be explored by F&A. If the administration of the IDRA awards were outsourced then current F&A program staff could turn their attention to some of the new activities discussed here.

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<sup>6</sup> This method is used by Canada Agri-Food Policy Institute graduate awards managed by the AUCC.

## **Evaluation of proposals**

161. IDRA proposal evaluation should be quantified. F&A should design an evaluation form with clearly identified criteria, each given an appropriate grade weighting.<sup>7</sup> The proposals should be sent to a mixture of IDRC PSs and some outside experts. A specific date for return of evaluations should be identified. When the reviews have been received, a face to face meeting could be held with a small committee, including external evaluators and relevant IDRC program staff. During a one day meeting, the committee would review the evaluations, ensure that they are fair, and select an appropriate number of award winners. This annual (or even biannual) meeting could be managed by F&A and chaired by the director of the division or by a senior IDRC research manager. Even if the administration of the awards is outsourced, F&A could maintain control over the evaluations, especially if the IDRA awards become more closely aligned to Centre strategic programming priorities.<sup>8</sup> Relevant staff in regional offices could still be involved in reviewing proposals and possibly participate in evaluation meetings through videoconferencing.

## **Awards to MA/MSc Students**

162. F&A is currently questioning whether MA/MSc students should again be eligible for IDRA awards. The policy was changed in 2004 when the awards were extended to include citizens of developing countries. Since F&A already receives a large number of applications for the IDRA awards it would create an even greater administrative burden to once again open the awards to MA/MSc students. Moreover, since the research internship awards are aimed primarily at MA-level candidates, it does not seem necessary to go back to awarding research grants to masters students.

## **New Directions for Other Canada-based Awards**

### **Internships**

#### **Application Processes**

163. The intern application process is time consuming and demanding. A number of innovations could be considered. First, the one year internships are organized according to the calendar year, from January to December. For most students who are completing formal studies it would be more convenient to begin their internship in August or September. For interns coming from overseas, it would also mean that they have time to acclimatize before being faced with a Canadian winter. The cut-off date for Internship applications would have to be fairly early – perhaps in March to ensure sufficient time for evaluation and selection before Centre staff disperse on summer vacations. Secondly, the application process could be made less demanding. References should be required only when interns have been selected, rather than at the beginning of the application process. Copies of final grades should be

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<sup>7</sup> This approach is already being used by the Adaptation H2O Graduate Research Awards Competition of the IDRC Climate Change and Water Program. The evaluation criteria developed by the Program include: student capability; relevance; approach and methodology; flexibility; budget and schedule. Innovatively, the H2O awards competition is using past grantees as evaluators, thus keeping up contact with them.

<sup>8</sup> SSHRC, CBIE, and AUCC all indicated that they would be able to accommodate a mixed management model whereby they handled administrative aspects of the awards and the Centre maintained control over the substantive evaluations. However, each of them would be able to contribute to the substantive evaluation process by being able to identify subject experts through their extensive links into the Canadian university system.

sufficient rather than original transcripts and an original letter from the university where the student has been registered.

## **Mentors**

164. The quality of mentorship within the Centre varies greatly. Although F&A provides mentors with written guidelines, it may be useful to organize an annual workshop on mentoring. In some cases, mentors do not have a clear idea of the intern's role and this can lead to lost time and frustration for interns. F&A should ask each program to develop a clear intern workplan before the program is awarded an internship. F&A could also develop a research concept note on mentorship. (This could also be shared with the SJRA institutions).<sup>9</sup>

## **Alumni Networking**

165. All awardees who have received support from F&A (IDRA awards, internships, sabbatical awards, etc.) are part of the F&A alumni and should be seen as a valuable resource for the Centre. This is especially true in the context of current efforts to make IDRC's work better known in Canada. F&A should assign a program management officer to work on alumni networking. That person should ensure the F&A alumni records are kept up to date and encourage the creation of alumni chapters in each province. A webpage should be developed specifically to share alumni news and highlight special achievements, honours, etc. Each year, F&A could host an alumni reception in a different part of the country. The reception could be preceded by a development-related talk given by an F&A alumni or by a senior IDRC program staff member.

## **Additional Activities for F&A: Raising its Profile**

167. There are a number of other activities that F&A could explore. A few ideas are noted below but it should be stressed that most of these could not be undertaken without additional human resources, although early scoping activities could be done by a consultant.

- Development of F&A policy briefs based on the findings of IDRC awardees
- F&A scoping studies on the training needs of different regions and/or in different disciplines
- Monitoring and evaluation of F&A activities leading to a series of research notes on "lessons learned" and new approaches to training
- Short sabbatical placement of IDRC staff in Canadian universities, especially in departments of international development studies<sup>10</sup>
- Creation of a marquee fellowship or award for someone who has made an impact in the field of research training (perhaps a Hopper Award?)

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<sup>9</sup> The Gender and Diversity Program of the CGIAR has developed a number of useful research notes on this topic (<http://www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/>).

<sup>10</sup> IDRC staff could spend three month writing sabbaticals in Canadian universities. They could write about "lessons learned" in training activities they have supported and reflect on innovative approaches to research training. This would have the dual advantage of producing a body of work on IDRC approaches to training and of promoting a greater IDRC presence in the Canadian academic environment.



## New Directions for SJRA

### Focus

169. SJRA is rather diverse. The five programs that were studied train students in peace and conflict studies, agriculture, information technology for development, agricultural economics and health systems research. The two new West African programs provide training in economics and in health and population policy. In each case, there is a clear link with a particular IDRC program but the overall impact of the SJRA initiative is questionable because it is spread too thin over many diverse research areas. Each of the SJRA projects is performing well in its own right but it might have been more effective for F&A to invest CAD\$5,435,123 in a single research area. A more concentrated approach would have a greater impact in terms of capacity building.

170. All the SJRA project leaders and the ESARO program staff interviewed for this study were asked to identify some key research issues that they thought would become important in the region over the next few years. Of course their answers were influenced by their own training and biases but overall they provide insight into what is considered important in the region (Box 3). It may be useful to identify one or two of these issues for F&A attention in the context of future SJRA-type awards.

171. SJRA currently is based exclusively in Africa but regional directors have stressed the need for fellowships support in all other regions. SARO has expressed a need for training in institutional development and institutional reform. In ASRO there is a need to build capacity in individual countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam, rather than regionally. MERO has asked for both institutional and individual capacity building. LACRO wants to build capacity specifically in evaluation methodologies. While all of these requests have merit, it will not be possible for F&A to satisfy all of them with its present funding and human resources profile. More importantly, such requests should form part of the overall visioning and priority setting exercise within F&A (which in turn, of course, should be influenced by the expressed needs of programs and regional offices).

### Box 3 Emerging Research Issues in Eastern and Southern Africa

#### Environment

Climate change – adaptation at the local level  
Management of “stable” environments that will be effected by climate change

#### Employment and Entrepreneurship

Employment for young people  
Innovation for young people  
Entrepreneurship  
South-south transfer of technology  
Phone-based e-commerce

#### Education

Quality of higher education  
Revise the education systems – make less rigid and more relevant  
Change agricultural education to be more relevant to entrepreneurship

#### Health

Holistic approach to health including public health and veterinary health  
Appropriate health systems  
Non communicable diseases  
ICT-based health applications  
Health needs of the elderly

#### Economics and Governance

Teach civil service how to work in multiparty systems  
Governance in the private sector  
Encourage philanthropy in the private sector  
Human security  
Evidence based decision making  
Distribution of economic benefits

172. Another important issue for consideration is whether F&A should fund SJRA projects on its own or whether funding should always be in collaboration with other IDRC programs. All the SJRA projects have had at least some support from a program area within the Centre. However, in several cases the collaborating programs have ceased to exist or program priorities have shifted. For example the project at the University of Nairobi was undertaken in collaboration with Acacia, which no longer exists. The project at UPeace was funded with the Peace, Conflict and Development program. Program priorities have shifted slightly so further support is under discussion. This has placed F&A into a position of having to provide additional support to UPeace (for workshops) to allow them to complete the current program of fellowships.

173. Some IDRC staff mentioned the name “Southern Junior Researchers Awards” as being inappropriate since many trainees are well into their 40s. A more appropriate title might be “Southern Research Training Awards.”

## **Internships**

174. Most or all the students supported by SRJA are already employed in universities or research institutions. However many have had limited exposure to other institutions and would benefit from a brief period of attachment to another research-related institution either in their own country or in another country in the region. For example, a Ugandan doctoral awardee in the UPeace program, arranged a one month internship at COMESA in Lusaka, Zambia. She was writing her dissertation on the impact of the East African community and COMESA on Ugandan economic growth. While at COMESA, she realized that her research covered only part of the organization’s work and that their approach was much broader than she had realized. Nonetheless, she was able to make some suggestions for improving their database and to encourage them to rethink some of their work on Uganda. She thinks that the internship was beneficial for both sides and COMESA would have liked her to participate in trade missions, and develop papers on COMESA activities. Similarly, RUFORUM has included internships in its MSc program for some time (although not in the Centre-funded doctoral awards).

175. Some opportunities for internships already exist. For example, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) has regular openings for unpaid internships at its offices in Geneva, Dakar and New York. Uganda’s Economic Policy Research Centre has supported internships in the past, with support from the African Capacity Building Foundation. The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis has a one year “young professionals” program and IDRC’s Think Tank Initiative is helping the Ethiopian Economics Association to establish a similar program

176. IDRC already has relationships with research-based institutions throughout Africa and it would not be difficult to arrange for them to offer a few internships. However, it would be necessary to ensure that these institutions have appropriate infrastructure and supervisors to accommodate interns. Internships should be an option for some awardees and not a standard part of the IDRC doctoral research awards.

## **Inclusion of Francophone and Lusophone Candidates**

177. There are no easy solutions to involving more Francophones and Lusophones in the SJRA program, given the linguistic difficulties. However, AERC has worked with both language groups for many years

and has experiences that could be shared with other SJRA Anglophone institutions. Similarly, UPeace has ideas on how to approach the issue, as discussed earlier.

178. Some IDRC program staff are of the opinion that research capacity is particularly low in Francophone institutions and there is a pressing need to build basic research capacity through methodology workshops and other types of training. In this area there may be possibilities of collaboration with the IFS since they also work in French.

## **E-learning**

179. E-learning, or online learning, is still in its infancy in most of Africa but as connectivity becomes less of a problem and computers become cheaper, it offers immense possibilities for education and for upgrading of skills and knowledge. RUFORUM was the only SJRA institution that is giving special attention to e-learning but there is considerable capacity within Canada that could be shared with the SJRA institutions. Athabasca University in Alberta is a leader in this field. F&A should consider convening a meeting of SJRA institutions (and possibly some Think Tank Initiative institutions) to address the possibilities of e-learning both for formal degree courses and for short, targeted learning modules on specific topics.

## **Scientific Entrepreneurship**

180. The development of science-based industry is essential for Eastern and Southern Africa to move to the next level of economic development. Most African PhDs seek employment at universities or in research institutes and relatively few have ventured into the private sector or set up their own research-based enterprises. For example, a current SJRA recipient has developed a software application in local languages for use by farmers. It is currently being field tested but the researcher does not have a clear idea of how to bring his technology to the marketplace.

181. F&A could make a significant contribution by organizing a series of workshops aimed at training researchers to move into entrepreneurship. Topics to be covered would include: writing a business plan; searching for venture capital; forming partnerships; patents and protection of intellectual property, etc. Preliminary discussions with researchers in the ESARO region have been very positive about this idea. OSSEREA based in Addis Ababa and with members throughout the region, has indicated an interest in developing such workshops.

182. Enterprise Uganda (<http://www.enterprise.co.ug/index.htm>) in Kampala already works with local entrepreneurs, providing an integrated and comprehensive range of business development services entrepreneurship training, business advisory and counselling service, information, business planning, marketing, technology, business linkages and other services to assist both start-ups and existing businesses. It could be a potential partner in developing a pilot project in scientific entrepreneurship. Another possible partner is Wits Enterprise (<http://hermes.wits.ac.za/Enterprise/index.html>), based at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Wits Enterprise facilitates and promotes customised, contract research and consultancy between Wits academic experts and external clients. They offer a series of short term courses on finance management for non-specialists, risk assessment and project management.

183. Interestingly, the AWARD program, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been asked by its donors to include training for entrepreneurship in its future programming. There may be some possibility for collaboration with them.

### **Research Management and Grant Administration**

184. Management of large research programs continues to be a weak area for many developing country institutions. Boards of research organizations are often very weak and do not have a clear idea of their roles. For example, they rarely address issues of institutional sustainability or fund raising strategies.

185. Research management training is a critical area and F&A could consider providing some awards to train research managers. Secondly, in collaboration with the Centre's regional controllers, F&A could organize workshops in research management and grant administration. A starting point is to prepare guidelines for institutions outlining the requirements for financial and progress reports. Similarly, F&A should develop standard templates for technical reports.

### **Sustainability**

186. Both ESARO POs and SJRA institution directors emphasized that there will be a continuing need to train research human resources for the next decade and longer. In reflecting upon sustainability, the SJRA project leaders tended to think of approaching traditional donors for support, although some talked of the need for national governments to take a greater responsibility in financing training. However, there is another possibility that could be explored. Countries like Kenya, Uganda and South Africa increasingly have wealthy, educated upper middle classes. There is also a history of fundraising to support local causes. It may be opportune to explore the possibility of mobilizing local resources to support academic endeavours, including research training. F&A could commission a think piece about the possibility of raising money for academic endeavours in the ESARO region. For example, the idea of naming university faculties or chairs after private donors could be explored and the possibility of establishing specific scholarships in honour of wealthy individuals could also be studied.

## **PART III: RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. F&A Restructuring**

1.1 Develop a clear vision for F&A programming with set objectives and indicators, covering each strategic plan cycle.

1.2 Ensure that F&A has sufficient resources, both human and financial, to allow it to move from being a service program to becoming a leader in innovative thinking on fellowships and awards.

#### **2. F&A Administration**

2.1 Digitize all aspects of award management (calls, applications, application tracking, etc.). If the Centre is unable to do this quickly with in-house expertise, then F&A should work with an outside web development organization that has expertise in this area.

2.2 Establish a Centre-wide tracking system that will ensure all future training awards given by programming units are reported to F&A.

2.3 Develop an internal website for regional POs that provides a “quick guide” to Canadian universities and graduate training.

2.4 Design a simple standard application format that can be filled out online. Make forms available separately in French and in English.

2.5 Quantify evaluations for IDRA and other awards should be quantified. Design evaluation forms with clearly identified criteria, each given an appropriate grade weighting.

### **3. IDRA Awards**

3.1 Explore the costs of outsourcing the administrative management of awards, especially the IDRA awards. Explore the possibility of making a public call for bids since various institutions have expressed an interest.

3.2 Consider tying at least half the awards to topics that more closely reflect the Centre’s emerging areas of research interest as reflected in the strategic plans of programs.

3.3 Organize an annual research meeting with relevant IDRC program staff and successful IDRA candidates working on those topics.

3.4 Explore the costs and benefits of awarding the IDRA fellowships once annually instead of twice.

3.5 Develop strategies for systematic contacts with Canadian academic institutions outside Ontario and Quebec, for contacts with Canadian faculties of science and applied science and for Canadian Francophone academic institutions . This could include electronic and telephone communication as well as personal visits.

3.6 Send announcements to Executive Assistants in Program Branches at the beginning of each calendar year indicating exactly when the IDRA applications will be sent to POs for review.

3.7 Send IDRA proposals to a mixture of POs and some outsiders with relevant expertise. Former awardees could also be approached for this purpose.

3.8 After successful candidates have been chosen send a personal e-mail to all evaluators with a link to the list of awardees.

### **4. Internship Awards**

4.1 Commence internships in August or September, which is when most interns are likely to become available and evaluate internship applications in March-April, before IDRC staff disperses for summer vacations.

4.2 Make the application process simpler. References should be required only when interns have been selected. Copies of final grades should be sufficient should be sufficient proof of academic achievement.

4.3 Develop a research concept note on mentorship.

4.4 Post examples of successful internship applications from past years on the public website to give prospective applicants a better idea of what is required.

## **5. Sabbatical Awards**

5.1 Prepare specific guidelines for what is expected of sabbatical scholars.

## **6. Smaller Canada-based Awards**

6.1 Invite appropriate professional societies to administer those awards which are still managed in-house and provide a small amount of financial support for this purpose.

## **7. SJRA Awards**

7.1 Organize a series of workshops to train researchers in scientific entrepreneurship. Topics to be covered would include: writing a business plan; searching for venture capital; forming partnerships; patents and protection of intellectual property, etc

7.2 Provide awards to train research managers. In collaboration with the Centre's regional controllers, organize workshops in research management and grant administration.

7.3 Prepare guidelines outlining the requirements for financial and progress reports and develop standard templates for technical reports.

7.4 Commission a think piece about the potential for raising money from the private sector for academic endeavours in the ESARO region.

7.5 Identify key areas for future concentration for SJRA awards to achieve a greater impact.

7.6 Consult with Centre colleagues, especially the Think Tank Initiative, and with outside partners such as IFS and Agra to share experiences and discuss possible strategies for improving the responsiveness of supervisors for post-graduate students at African universities.

7.8 Organize a conference or stocktaking workshop to compare and discuss the different models that have been tried by SJRA partners, to draw out lessons learned and to strategize about sustainability for research capacity development in the region. The potential for e-learning could also be discussed at the meeting.

7.9 Organize internships for some SJRA awardees who would benefit from a brief period of attachment to another research-related institution either in their own country or in another country in the region.

7.10 Clearly state in the MGCs with SJRA institutions that IDRC support for awards must be explicitly acknowledged.

7.11 Consider changing the title of the award to “Southern Researcher Training Awards” or something similar.

## **8. Making F&A More Innovative**

8.1 Encourage awardees to publish short (2-3 page) policy briefs based on their research findings.

8.2 Produce scoping studies on the training needs of different regions and/or in different disciplines.

8.3 Undertake monitoring and evaluation of F&A activities and produce a series of research notes on “lessons learned” and new approaches to training.

8.6 Explore short sabbatical placements of IDRC staff in Canadian universities, allowing them to write up their program experiences with research training and/or reflections on innovative approaches to training.

8.7 Explore the possibility of creating a marquee fellowship or award for someone who has made an impact in the field of research training (perhaps a Hopper Award?)

8.8 Assign a program management officer to work on alumni networking, keep alumni records up to date, and encourage the creation of alumni chapters in each province.

8.9 Develop a webpage to share alumni news and highlight special achievements, honours, etc. Each year, host an alumni reception in a different part of the country.

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## **Interviews**

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